

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings and their discussion by the researcher after collecting all the data. The organization of the results of the overall research findings is the most crucial stage in writing that affects the final result. The discussion aims to provide answers to the problem formulation and interpretation of the results based on relevant theoretical reviews. The researcher discusses the research findings on factors influencing students' progress and satisfaction in differentiated learning in the independent curriculum and teachers' challenges in implementing differentiated learning in the classroom. The researcher presents the data descriptively based on the data collected through observations and interviews.

A. Findings

Based on the data and information that has been collected, then for the next step the researcher analyzes and describes the data that has been collected during the research through observations in classroom and in-depth interviews with 15 students and a teacher in the study by grouping the data based on the formulation of research problems as follows:

1. Factors of differentiated learning within an independent curriculum
contribute to students' progress and satisfaction with ELT
 - a. Students' Attitude
 - b. Students' Motivation
 - c. Students' Confidence

- d. Students' Proficiency Gaps
 - e. Students' Schemata
2. Challenges discovered by teachers in putting differentiated learning strategies in an Independent Curriculum for ELT
- a. Time and effort in preparing and designing the learning process.

The research was conducted at MTsN 1 Kotawaringin Barat from January 7 to February 18, 2025.

1. Factors of differentiated learning within an independent curriculum contribute to students' progress and satisfaction with ELT.

Based on observations and interviews conducted in the field, the researcher gathered data addressing the first question: the researcher wants to identify the factors contributing to student's progress and satisfaction with the differentiated learning approach in ELT in the independent curriculum. **a.**

a. Students' attitude

Students' attitudes toward process flexibility are one of the elements that contribute to varied learning in ELT at Independence curriculum. According to the findings of the interviews, students said that having a variety of learning approaches improves their comprehension and encouragement to learn because it is simple for them to switch to the most effective approach. As expressed by one of the students AM,

“I support learning that offers choices in how to learn by providing flexibility in how to learn, students can choose what

suits them, and increases understanding and motivation to learn.” (AM, script 8, line 1, interview data)

Students' success and pleasure with differentiated learning are ultimately impacted by their attitude, which shows how they react to the chance to learn in a more personalized way.

1.) Students Progress

Based on observations made in class 9A, the researcher discovered that the majority of students demonstrated active participation in the discussions, particularly when open-ended questions were asked. There were a few students who needed encouragement to share their ideas because they were hesitant. Similarly, class 9B observation data revealed that while most students seemed enthusiastic, only a small percentage paid attention or passively followed their friends' thoughts without making any meaningful contributions. This shows that despite the differences in students' responses, the applied learning method is able to catalyze them to engage in the learning process and also attract students' attention in understanding the material better.

In accordance to the interview results, which support the findings from the observations in classes 9A and 9B, some students responded positively to learning that offers a variety of learning options. They believe that the learning strategy that best fits their individual learning preferences greatly enhances their comprehension, comfort level, and

desire to participate more actively in the learning process. Various student remarks frequently demonstrate this positive attitude.

AA provides an interesting perspective by mentioning that choice-based learning not only helps to understand the material, but also provides a fun challenge. He expressed,

"Yes, it more or less helped me to understand new words that I had never seen or known. I have to digest what is meant in the question, plus there is time to see how long I can do it. So it's quite challenging but fun." (AA, script 6, line 4, interview data)

This illustrates how different learning styles allow students to grow in critical and reflective thinking as well as cognitive abilities. The interview results above highlight how students' attitudes toward problems in differentiated learning impact their learning progress in addition to positive attitudes and responses to learning that offer alternatives in how to learn.

Then, AM gave a thoughtful explanation about how difficult and easy material impact to students progress,

"If the material is too easy, I may feel bored and less motivated to study further. If it is too difficult, I may feel frustrated and lose confidence, which actually hinders my learning progress." (AM, script 8, line 11, interview data)

This statement highlights the significance of maintaining a balance in the degree of difficulty of the material; too easy material reduces cognitive engagement, while too hard material may cause emotional

barriers. In regard with this, differentiated learning that can precisely determine and modify the degree of difficulty is essential to student development. Besides that, ESI provided a more adaptable response by exhibiting learning maturity,

“When there is material that is beyond my understanding, it encourages me to study the material more deeply so that I understand it better. If there is material that is still in line with my understanding, I will still study it more deeply.”

(ESI, script 13, line 9, interview data)

Despite the degree of difficulty, this statement describes the autonomous mindset of students by using challenges as an opportunity for exploration and comprehension reinforcement. This implies that, when approached with interest and a strong desire to learn, challenges of any kind can serve as an encouragement for advancement. But AAZ offered a another viewpoint,

“Rarely, because in some materials I have learned before.”

(AAZ, script 11, line 6, interview data)

This reflects that obstacles do not always restrict or affect students' learning progress, because there must be some students who still think about the material they have gained, such as AAZ.

Overall, the findings of the observations and interviews imply that varied learning that allows choices in how to study might boost students' participation, comfort and motivation to learn. The strategy was fairly effective in attracting attention and enhancing cognitive

engagement, despite differences in reactions between students. Depending on each student's preparation and attitude toward the subject, learning challenges also have varying effects on learning progress.

2.) *Students Satisfaction*

Students in classes 9A and 9B exhibit the same pattern, based on observations: they are feel comfortable and have a positive attitude about this learning. All of the students that was viewed appeared calmly in the classroom. This is proved by interacting with friends and teachers and no displaying any signs of hesitation or pressure to engage in the learning process. When learning needs were customized for each student, they took on a positive interest in the process, which boosted enthusiasm and made learning more enjoyable. This situation exhibits how attitudes among students affect how satisfied they are with their education.

The outcome of interviews with an amount of students about their responses to a differentiated learning strategy that requires consider their individual learning styles lend strength to this. Similar results occurred from the answers of some students, including AA, AM, SRO, and NAK, who reported feeling more relax, enjoying learning, motivated, and confident when it is tailored to their preferences. Some direct quotations from students outlining their opinions and experiences point out this. As stated by AA,

“Yes, I feel more comfortable because I can learn in a way that suits me, and a little more confident because the learning process is tailored to my needs.” (AA, script 6, line 8, interview data)

This response shows how personalized approach to learning for every student not only stimulates comfort but also boosts self-confidence. This suggests that learning freedom allows students build a positive attitude toward learning, which might enhance the pleasure of learning activities. AM commented the equal point when she declared,

“Of course I will feel comfortable and happy. It also makes the learning process more effective and less overwhelming.”
(AM, script 8, line 7, interview data)

It can be inferred that this approach not only impacts on students' affective aspects (comfort and enjoyment), but also on their perception of the effectiveness and efficiency of learning. Students that have these attitudes not only follow the learning process passively but also find enjoyment in it, which provides the structure for increased learning satisfaction. Furthermore, SRO provides the learning process an exploratory dimension by saying,

“Of course it makes me feel comfortable, my feeling is that I feel happy because with the choice of learning methods I can improve my learning methods, I can try learning in a new way.” (SRO, script 9, line 8 interview data)

In this situation, it means that this learning provides opportunities for students to experiment with new ways that they may not have

attempted before. This positive attitude not only boosts students' involvement in class, but this leads to a more interesting and meaningful learning experience, increasing the level of their satisfaction with the learning process. Following responses from NAK included an emotional dimension that is closely related to attitude and satisfaction. She explained,

“Yes, it will definitely make me comfortable, happy to be excited, optimistic, and it will definitely make me even more motivated.” (NAK, script 15, line 5, interview data)

Words such as "excited", "optimistic," and "motivated" propose a typically positive attitude toward learning. These affective aspects, such as joy and interest, play a significant role in students' views of their learning experience, which has a direct impact on their learning satisfaction while also serving as a key foundation for active participation in an intensive and long-term learning process.

Meanwhile, not all students responded enthusiastically, there was also a different answer from AAZ who was declaring,

“It's just ordinary.” (AAZ, script 11, line 5, interview data)

Although this is a minority response, it matters because it clarifies that not all students experience the benefits of individualized learning. It is possible that some students, such as AAZ, are still oblivious of the advantages of this differentiated approach or are still searching for an ideal match with the learning style presented.

b. Students Motivation

The student motivation factor is particularly relevant in the independent curriculum, which supports flexible and personalized learning. In terms of materials and methods of learning, the free curriculum encourages teachers to adopt strategies that are tailored to the particular needs and characteristic of each student.

Based on the results of observations conducted in two different class, it is concluded that student motivation in learning based on differentiation has a real impact on their learning progress. In the independent learning initiative indicator, students shown high initiative in the independent learning initiative indicator; the majority actively learn independently and don't mind asking questions. And jut some students on the other hand, preferred to wait for the teacher to give them directions. This is supported by interview research conducted with students like MHR, students frequently reported feeling more engaged, enthused, and eager to learn when assignments or resources were customized to fit their particular needs, interests, and understanding level.

“Of course, because that way it increases my enthusiasm to continue learning.” (MHR, script 4, line 8, interview data)

The statements made by MHR personalized learning increases students' active participation and emphasizes how it can increase their enthusiasm to learn. Meanwhile, AM also mentioned that learning which has relevant

to his interests and comprehension level keeps him from feeling overburdened or uninterested, which boosts his excitement for learning.

“Yes, when the material matches my level of understanding and interest, learning feels more relevant. I also feel more excited about learning without feeling overwhelmed or bored.” (AM, script 8, line 14, interview data)

These kinds of statements support the idea that when varied learning is executed well, students' intrinsic motivation can rise. Similar statements were also conveyed by SRO and ESI who emphasizing that learning resources that satisfy demands improve comprehension and boost motivation for learning. SRO explained,

“Yes, because I feel that what I learn is appropriate to my needs, which makes it easier for me to understand some of the material.” (SRO, script 9, line 15, interview data)

And ESI also expressed,

“Yes, I become more motivated when the materials suit my needs, as it makes learning lighter.” (ESI, script 13, line 12, interview data)

The findings of observations collected throughout the learning process further support this outcome. As determined by observation data from two different classes, every student consistently attended on time and fulfilled all of the assigned English language tasks. Accurate attendance can be interpreted as a sign of high motivation for students to participate in class. This correlates with differentiated application, which is demonstrated by the behavior. Students are more likely to attend and actively participate in

class activities when they believe that the materials are related to their needs. Following the principles of differentiated learning in the independence curriculum that emphasize the importance of understanding each student's needs, increasing motivation is a result of relevant and effective education that creates an engaging and challenging learning environment so that students feel valued and supported during their studies. This illustrates the idea that differentiated learning in the independence curriculum does not only focus on teaching different materials, but also on developing learning contexts that encourage students' motivation and active participation.

1.) *Students Progress*

When learning is tailored to the abilities of each student, they feel more motivated to learn. This adjustment not only stimulates enthusiasm for learning, but also has a positive impact on understanding the material more deeply. This is reflected in the statements of several students who said that learning appropriate to their level of understanding helps focus on understanding the concepts of the material and not just a brief understanding. For example, AM conveyed,

"When the material is appropriate to my level of understanding, I can focus on truly understanding the concepts." (AM, script 8, line 16, interview data)

LSS and ESI also added similar statements,

"Yes, with the right learning method, you will gain a deep understanding of the material." (LSS, script 7, line 9, interview data)

"Yes, I understand better because the material is tailored to my needs." (ESI, script 13, line 14, interview data)

Depending to the mentioned above statement, learning motivation that comes from relevant learning and that is suitable for the student's ability level may significantly advance student progress. It also helps the process of integrating knowledge when the learning approach is appropriate for the student's style and ability. Regarding enthusiasm to complete assignments, observations revealed that the majority of students were highly motivated and capable of finishing assignments quickly. On the opposite this point, some students finishing the assignments because they're supposed to. This clarifies that there are variances in motivation between students. Interviews with students like MRF and AA supported this view about the eager to doing a task,

"Yes, I feel more motivated or more enthusiastic about completing assignments." (MRF, script 12, line 6, interview data)

Besides being motivated to do assignments and learn the material, AA highlighted that she becomes more focused and engaged in the learning process when she received materials that fit his personal learning style.

“Yes, I feel really motivated when the assignments or materials are tailored to my needs. Because then, I feel more connected and more focused, because the material given is in accordance with my way of learning.” (AA, script 6, line 16, interview data)

Furthermore, about the seeking for additional learning resources outside of the classroom, such as asking friends or searching for information on the internet. It is clear that a lot of students use their friends as extra resources for studying, and if they are permitted to use a device, they actively search the internet. However, it turns out that there are some students who feel that the help of friends does not help and motivate them in the learning process. This further demonstrates how eager students can influence their learning motivation and are more likely to take the initiative to expand their knowledge through a variety of sources. Interviews confirming the findings as expressed by LSS,

“Friends play a big role in motivation, especially in differentiated learning. They can provide support, ideas and make learning more fun.” (LSS, script 7, line 13, interview data)

“Yes, because learning with friends makes it faster to understand because we can exchange useful information and tips.” (LSS, script 7, line 16, interview data)

This indicates that social motivation through friends support can lead learning progress, which is in line with the observation findings that

students discuss and ask friends a lot. MRM also added a similar opinion,

“Yes, I am a person who likes to be alone, but I feel good having someone to talk to. I feel motivated and make more progress.” (MRM, script 10, line 16, interview data)

According to MRM, social support from friends might serve as a source of motivation. Students are more likely to be interested and passionate about learning when they feel encouraged and actively participate in discussions with other students. According above to LSS and MRM's claims friends have a crucial role in boosting students' motivation and academic achievement in besides serving as social friends.

Nevertheless, not all students are at comfortable in a group setting, and others, like SZ and SQ, is more interested in alone. In the statement by SZ,

“Not too much, because I purely consider friends as playmates only, not to motivate myself.” (SZ, script 2, line 15, interview data)

“I only feel like I'm making progress if I'm with my friends who can think clearly, otherwise, I prefer to study alone.” (SZ, script 2, line 17, interview data)

Similarly, SQ told us the same thing,

“It doesn't really play a role.” (SQ, script 14, line 11, interview data)

"I feel more comfortable learning by myself, because I feel more free in my opinion and do it at any time I want." (SQ, script 14, line 12, interview data)

Some students encountered more motivated and productive when they studied alone, as they thought they could concentrate better without the distractions of friends. This displays how some students view friends as figures who only support play or socializing, rather than as factors that impact learning motivation.

In the end, the observations and interviews reveal that motivation, both internal and external, support students to be more active and make an increase in deep understanding in their differentiated learning process and academic progress. When learning resources and methods are matched to students' needs and learning styles, they are more likely to be engaged, independent, and excited towards completing assignments. This leads in more optimal learning process.

2.) *Students Satisfaction*

According to the observations made in classes 9A and 9B, the majority of students demonstrate interest in the material that the teacher is teaching, even though their expressions of interest are not always shown explicitly. They pay close attention when the teacher is explaining, and they ask questions, although not many of them. For example, *"miss, what does this mean?"* or *"If it's like this, is it possible, miss?"* reflect a desire to learn more about the subject matter being taught. Even while there are a few students who tend to be more

quiet, their behavior still shows interest, but in a more calm way. When given an assignment, students immediately do it without needing much guidance, which is also an indicator of interest and involvement in the subject material.

Furthermore, in terms of discipline, the results of the observation show that discipline is high with consistent attendance and participation in every English language lesson from beginning to end. Serves as a signal that students have commitment and interest in the learning process. Students' dedication to and interest in the learning process are presented early on due to their timeliness. Whether in grade 9A or 9B, the researcher does not recognize any deliberate lateness or absence. This discipline attitude can be interpreted as a form of self-control and internal motivation for students to participate in learning in the best possible way.

When connected to this context, the interest in the subject matter and student discipline is highly relevant. Students who are motivated both internally and externally are more likely to actively engage with the material and point out interest in it, as well as to be satisfied with the learning process and results they encounter. The outcomes of in-depth interviews indicate the range of learning styles that inspire student satisfaction and motivation. According to DAR, she was satisfied when the instructor truly assisted students in comprehending a lesson.

“The learning that really satisfies me is when the person who teaches me, helps me to understand what I am learning.”

(DAR, script 1, line 20, interview data)

This illustrates how the teacher's function as a facilitator and support system has an impact on DAR's learning motivation rather than a specific type or approach to learning. MHR went on to say that he prefers learning that is informal and not overly controlled.

“Listening of course, with the addition of playing around a bit.” (MHR, script 4, line 10, interview data)

This response implies that, despite MHR's more passive (auditorial) learning style, learning motivation can come from an environment that encourages comfort, and does not burden students emotionally and provides space for entertainment or light activities. On the other hand, AR enjoys learning that requires active engagement,

“The type of learning that is in groups, or that makes students speak up in front of class.” (AR, script 5, line 14, interview data)

This shows AR's preference for performative and collaborative learning approaches, which are appropriate for expressive and sociable students who find learning motivation in performing in front of the class or actively participating in groups. Unlike before, AA says that,

“I'm most excited by learning that involves art or visual methods, because it's more exciting and makes me more focused.” (AA, script 6, line 19, interview data)

AA shows a strong preference for visual-kinesthetic learning style, in which engaging visual media and imaginative activities, including project-based learning, impact learning motivation. Then LSS also added something similar to the combined learning of AR and AA, which is interactive and applicable learning,

“I prefer interactive and applicable learning, such as discussions or practical exercises.” (LSS, script 7, line 11, interview data)

Meanwhile LSS are actively engaged in the learning process through interaction or real-world application, their motivation levels rise. This allows for discussion activities or field practice because it allows them to make the connection between theory and practice.

Overall from the interviews about their learning interest, it can be inferred that nearly all students are motivated when learning involves interaction, such as active participation in groups or individually, visualization, practical experience, and a fun environment that can produce a meaningful and fulfilling learning experience.

The data gathered of the interview then showed that most students acknowledged the significant impact of friend motivation on their satisfaction after being asked if they feel comfortable when learning is influenced by their classmates. Friends' encouragement or support boosts their self-confidence, enthusiasm, and feeling of togetherness during the learning process. It is likely that social factors in the classroom also affect students' motivation, which in turn affects their

degree of learning satisfaction. The outcomes of interviews with multiple students, including one who is AA, validate this.

"Yes, because my friends' support made me more confident and aware to trying harder, so the learning outcomes feel more satisfying." (AA, script 6, line 25, interview data)

Afterwards, AM and ESI added identical statements,

"Yes, friends can provide additional encouragement that makes me more excited and not feel alone in the learning process." (AM, script 8, line 22, interview data)

"Yes, I am more satisfied, because the support or motivation from friends really encourages me to study." (ESI, script 13, line 20, interview data)

Overall, interviews and observations with students reveal that the majority of students in grades 9A and 9B exhibit strong discipline and enthusiasm in learning materials, as seen by their prompt attendance and active participation in class. This demonstrates a great desire to learn more about material being taught, both from internal and external sources. This motivation has been shown to significantly increase students' pleasure with learning, particularly when the learning technique fits their preferred learning style. The kind of interacting, practicality, and learning through experience determines the satisfaction of students. Other aspects include self-motivation, friends, teachers, and parents, all of affecting learning satisfaction.

c. Students Confidence

Building self-confidence is a crucial component of an autonomous curriculum that prioritizes adaptable and student-centered learning. Students that are confident are more willing to take participating actively, voice their opinions, and attempt new learning difficulties. Students with high levels of self-confidence are able to receive a variety of teaching tailored to their needs without hesitation or anxiety. Students who lack confidence, in comparison, are more likely to be inactive, be afraid to ask questions when they are having problems, and take a passive role in learning.

1.) Students Progress

According to class 9A observation data, students had an attitude of confidence when they stood up to complete homework in front of the class. Because they were not afraid to ask questions, the class discussions were active. The students' confidence in class 9B then revealed that they needed more guidance and assistance from their teacher before they felt comfortable asking questions or completing assignments in front of the class. There was a wide range of viewpoints presented throughout the class discussion. The observation results are also in line with interviews with several students, that they are confident and brave to ask questions or express opinions. AM explained,

“When I feel confident, I am more willing to ask questions, discuss and express my opinions, which often deepens my

understanding of the material.” (AM, script 8, line 32, interview data)

As stated by DAR, receiving clear instructions that suit their needs can increase their confidence, which in turn makes them more active in learning. He also added that if she believes in himself, she is more brave to actively participate in class.

“Yes, if I receive different instructions but I easily accept and understand the instructions, maybe it can develop myself and increase my confidence.” (DAR, script 1, line 32, interview data)

“Yes, because I believe in myself and it is because of that belief that makes me participate more actively in class.” (DAR, script 1, line 40, interview data)

Then SRO revealed that he felt his learning progress increased if he tried to be more active in class, he became more aware of new things that were previously unknown.

“Of course, if we are active in class then we know more things that we didn't know before.” (SRO, script 9, line 38, interview data)

2.) Students Satisfaction

The majority of students in both classrooms were able to complete assignments on their own and turn them in on time, according to observations made in two distinct classes. Some students continued to express skepticism about their own responses and ultimately sought confirmation from others. This uncertainty prompted them to ask their

peers for confirmation that their responses were accurate. Furthermore, most students still felt uncertain enough to re-explain the content they had been given because they believed their knowledge was immature. Not many students were confident enough to reinforce what the teacher had taught. This phenomena indicates how students' confidence levels can differ significantly and impact how satisfied they are with what they are studying.

From the interview results, some students confirmed that self-confidence is a factor that affects learning satisfaction. AA reported that,

“Self-confidence is the main key to achieving satisfaction, because without self-confidence, students will find it difficult to develop and achieve maximum results.” (AA, script 6, line 37, interview data)

ESI also emphasized the same thing,

“When students feel confident, they become brave to try new things, become enthusiastic about learning, and feel more satisfied with the results they have achieved.” (ESI, script 13, line 32, interview data)

Meanwhile, MRF provided an additional point of view,

“Not really, sometimes students' satisfaction in learning is also influenced by how the teacher explains the material.” (MRF, script 12, line 23, interview data)

This suggests that how the teacher presents the subject can have an impact on student satisfaction, implying that self-confidence is not the only factor that impacts.

Then, related to commodities that make students satisfied in learning when their confidence develops is when they are given feedback or admiration by teachers and classmates, as expressed by DAR,

“The thing that makes me feel more satisfied is when I come forward for a task and when I finish I am rewarded with applause, I think that really helps my confidence increase.”
(DAR, script 1, line 37, interview data)

And SZ also had a similar answer,

“I feel satisfied when I am active in class and the teacher praises me for that.” (SZ, script 2, line 23, interview data)

Some students also added that they became brave to explain the material back to their classmates, as claimed by AA,

“Yes, I feel more confident because I have understood some of the material. I can explain to my friends in my own language, and that makes me proud because I can understand the material well.” (AA script 6, line 31, interview data)

And ESI also said that she did not hesitate to show her ability where she dared to re-explain the material and her understanding of learning,

“Yes, when my self-confidence increases I become more enthusiastic to try new things and I don't hesitate to show my abilities.” (ESI, script 13, line 26, interview data)

Lastly, other interviewees from LSS, MRM and MRF explained similar answers to each other that they were not afraid to ask questions or discuss, and were confident to work on more difficult material.

“Of course, if my confidence increases, I can be more courageous to try new challenges, ask questions without hesitation, and feel more confident when facing difficult material.” (LSS, script 7, line 22, interview data)

“I am more courageous in doing assignments without fear of failure.” (MRM, script 10, line 24, interview data)

“Yes, with increased self-confidence I am ready to try to do more difficult tasks than before.” (MRF, script 12, line 18, interview data)

The association between self-confidence and satisfaction among students fits in with differentiated learning, which considers student confidence as an important aspect. Students with high self-confidence are more satisfied with the learning process and outcomes because they believe in their own skills. In contrast, doubt and lack of confidence cause students to feel dissatisfied since they are unsure of their understanding and dedication. As therefore, measures to boost students' self-confidence must be prioritized in the learning process in order to improve overall satisfaction and learning outcomes. The findings also highlight the relevance of the teacher's involvement in developing students' self-confidence through approaches tailored to their unique skill abilities.

d. Students Proficiency Gaps

Student proficiency gaps, or differences in ability amongst students in a same class, are one of the components that contribute to learning success in differentiated learning in the autonomous curriculum. This gap includes several of subjects, including independent method of learning, critical thinking abilities, and comprehension of essential concepts. In order to best fulfill each student's learning needs, techniques, materials, and learning assistance must be adjusted in response to student gaps in skills. Because of this variation, students have different learning needs, making it harder for a standard teaching strategy in achieving the needs of every student. The results highlight how students handle challenging material and how they look for extra assistance to comprehend ideas covered in class. These variations represent not only important academic features but also the ability to solve problems and learning independence. Students are not always able to independently understand the material supplied, especially if the material or assignment is considered difficult to do. This phenomenon is a clear indication of the gap in the class between students. Based on observations in two different classes, the majority of students still require additional help to understand the concepts taught by the teacher. This is demonstrated by the behavior of students who seek guidance in different ways, such as asking friends, discussing, looking for other sources of information, or asking the teacher directly.

On the basis of the results of the interviews, students employ a variety of coping mechanisms when faced with challenging assignments or topics they are learning in class. Some students, like SZ, said that they try it on themselves first of all then ask friends and teachers for assistance if they run into further problems.

“I will try to solve it first, if I still can’t I will ask the teacher in front, and the final solution is to ask a friend who already understands.” (SZ, script 2, line 30, interview data)

Certain others, consisting of SRO, showed a strategy focused on looking for more information sources. To better comprehend difficult subjects, they explored books, the internet, video lessons, or discussion with friends.

“My method is to look for several sources of information via cellphone if it is allowed, but if it is not allowed, then look for information through books or it can also be discussed with friends to overcome this.” (SRO, script 9, line 41, interview data)

However, there were also students like AM who showed a more passive response, contemplating without immediately trying to find additional help or references.

“Usually when there is difficult material I just reflect on it.”
(AM, script 8, line 37, interview data)

This indicates that there is considerable variation in students’ coping strategies when facing academic difficulties.

1.) Students Progress

The majority of students exhibit a lack of comprehension of the basic concepts required for learning, according to observations made in class 9A. When presented with new material, many students seem confused, particularly if the teacher doesn't provide any further explanation. Then, while it was less intense while a similar situation also happened in the class 9b observation findings. While some kids still struggle, they seem to be more engaged in discussions with their friends.

According to the findings of interviews with a number of students, it seems that the difficulty of overcoming challenging assignments or ideas has a big impact on their comprehension of the subject matter. As DAR said, he revealed that the challenge affected his skills a little, but he tended to give up if he couldn't understand the material.

“It affects my ability a little, but eventually I will give up if I can't understand the material.” (DAR, script 1, line 45, interview data)

In contrast, students like AA and LSS actually made the challenge a motivation to focus more and think critically in order to understand the material better. AA revealed,

“This challenge makes me focus more and try hard to understand the material better.” (AA, script 6, line 42, interview data)

The same thing was also expressed by LSS,

“This challenge can make me more focused and think critically, so even though it is difficult, I can finally understand the material better.” (LSS, script 7, line 29, interview data)

This exhibits how students’ responses to learning problems varies significantly depending on their attitudes and learning methods. Furthermore, encouragement from friends, teachers, or other sources is extremely helpful in boosting students comprehension. Most students said that such support helped them comprehend the topic, improve their educational achievement, and upbringing their excitement for studying. NAK for example, indicated that asking inquiry questions and discussing the material helped him learn and discovered it better.

“If I find it difficult to understand the material then I will ask questions or discuss with others, and it can make me understand better and easier to remember.” (NAK, script 15, line 30, interview data)

SRO and ESI also confirmed that the support made them more satisfied with their learning outcomes and more motivated.

“Yes, I feel that the aids really help improve my understanding, etc., both in terms of grades and enthusiasm for learning.” (SRO, script 9, line 50, interview data)

“It’s very helpful, because what I didn’t understand at first I understand more about the material and that affects my grades and enthusiasm for learning. It also makes me more

satisfied with my learning results.” (ESI, script 13, line 47, interview data)

The findings of the observations and interviews demonstrated that the two classes under research had actual issues with basic subject comprehension and difficulties in completing assignments. Students' cognitive and motivational learning processes were significantly impacted by the ability difference. Students' comprehension and excitement for learning have improved with help from friends, teachers, and other sources. To maximize learning results and close the ability gap in the classroom, tailored instruction that is dependent on students' needs and skills must be implemented.

2.) *Students Satisfaction*

There were variations in a certain level of the engagement of students and expression when studying English, depending on the findings of observations made by researchers in two separate classes, class 9A and class 9B. By direct observation, researchers observed students' displays of ambiguity in answering questions or tasks they felt challenging.

In both classes, students generally showed grim faces, frowned, seemed to stop writing or staring at the worksheet without doing other activities, or looked at their friends just for help when they encountered difficulties. This reflects that they face confusion or frustration when they do not understand the queries being asked.

Conversely, when the questions or assignments are relatively easy, students' facial expressions remain calm and don't show worry, and they work on the questions quickly and more confidently. The researchers also observed a tendency for students to appear lazy or unwilling to participate in learning processes. Even so, the causes of this laziness were different between classes 9A and 9B. Students in class 9A, which studies English in the morning, appeared more engaged, active, and participated more comprehensively. This is possible because their energy remains in optimal condition. Nevertheless, in class 9B, when English is taught during the afternoon when students' energy levels are low, most students appeared quiet, unfocused, and drained, lifting their chins or even resting their heads on the table. Aside from learning time, the particulars of the material being taught has an impact on student enthusiasm. Material that seems entertaining and contextual can improve engagement, but material that appears hard and unfamiliar reduces learning enthusiasm.

Following additional observation, the results of the observations were supported by in-depth interviews with numerous students from both classrooms. Almost all respondents felt that the material's level of difficulty had a significant impact on their satisfaction with the learning experience. Students like DAR and LSS expressed explicitly that they felt extremely happy and satisfied after finishing challenging assignments since the challenge forced them to think more deeply.

Compared to simple assignments that did not offer a valuable educational experience, they believed that successfully completing challenging material represented a stronger sense of achievement in themselves. Like what DAR pointed out,

“Obviously there is, because the feeling of pride is more pronounced and it is very satisfying to be able to solve difficult material.” (DAR, script 1, line 47, interview data)

Also, LSS has a similar opinion,

“Yes, there is definitely a difference. When it’s difficult, the satisfaction is greater because there is a sense of accomplishment after overcoming the challenge.” (LSS, script 7, line 31, interview data)

But students like AA demonstrated that when they were challenged, their confidence actually decreased. He feels more focused and engaged while working with simple material since there is less pressure.

“Yes, when it’s difficult, I feel less satisfied and less confident, but when the material is easier, I feel more confident and motivated.” (AA, script 6, line 44, interview data)

In the end, it can be confirmed that students feel more confident and motivated when the material is tailored to their level of ability; fortunately, when the level of difficulty of the material is not aligned with their abilities, students may become confused, frustrated, and

even lazy. In this context, differentiated learning must take consideration the differences between students' abilities and their more academic abilities and be accompanied by adaptive learning strategies. Teachers can assign challenging assignments to students with higher abilities to increase their sense of achievement and satisfaction, while they must also provide proper explanations and understanding as well as easier-to-understand materials for students with lower abilities to maintain their confidence and motivation to learn.

e. Students Schemata

One of the last factors examined in this study is how students' schemata, or prior knowledge, supply for their comprehending of fresh material in class. Schemata, as one of the factors, plays a significant role in differentiated learning since students with varying backgrounds will exhibit different approaches to the topic material. The research results of the interviews indicated that the majority of students understood the value of their past knowledge in aiding their comprehension of new material. As an example, DAR explained that,

"When existing material is related to new material, it will be easier to understand." (DAR, script 1, line 54, interview data)

This demonstrates the activation of prior knowledge towards new information. This remark is consistent with the opinions of AA and SRO, who both emphasize the role of schemata or prior knowledge in linking

and simplifying the learning of new material to make it easier. AA pointed out,

“Existing knowledge helps me connect new material, making it easier to understand.” (AA, script 6, line 51, interview data)

While SRO revealed,

“Existing knowledge can help me understand the new material more easily, so I only need to read the new material in the form of important points. Then I can also understand it more easily because there is already previous material.” (SRO, script 9, line 52, interview data)

Meanwhile, students like MRF showed an interesting method, proving that he compared the new material to the old material.

“I usually compare the existing material with the new material first, then it will be easier for me to understand the new material.” (MRF, script 12, line 33, interview data)

This represents the use of schemata or existing knowledge as an evaluative framework for new material/information. However, not every student responded in the same way. SZ remarked that she did not think much about the prior content and preferred to concentrate only on the subject under discussion.

“I don't really think about that. I prefer to understand the material at hand and not think about the previous material.” (SZ, script 2, line 43, interview data)

This highlights the variety in the use of schemata, indicating their value for differentiated learning.

AM additionally added that he occasionally forgets prior material, indicating that earlier knowledge does not spontaneously return to our memory without developing or assistance, but must be triggered through certain approaches, such as reading the material again to recollect old knowledge.

“It depends, usually I can forget the material and remember it by rereading the material.” (AM, script 8, line 42, interview data)

These findings imply that students' cognitive schemas have a role for figuring out how quickly or slowly they adapt to new material. There additionally reveal that every student processes and adjusts material slightly depending on their prior knowledge. Cognitive schemas are existing knowledge structures that help process, comprehend, and arrange fresh material. Therefore, teachers are supposed to support the development of students' cognitive schemas by emphasizing the connections between previously learned material and current material while also giving students the chance to actively and freely develop their understanding.

1.) Students Progress

Students were regularly able to connect the material to real-world scenarios, according to the findings of observations made in two different classrooms. This illustrates how learning is easier for

students for understanding when it is related to things or situations that happen on daily lives. In simpler terms, learning that is suited to real-world situations facilitates students' comprehension of the material. Additionally, the findings of observations from two different classrooms hinted that the majority of students actively remembered and applied prior knowledge relative to the discussion topic under their studies. This proves that students' prior knowledge or understanding serves as the basis for completing new tasks and as an indication that student schemata play a crucial part in their learning process.

The outcomes from in-depth interviews with plenty of students assist the conclusions of this observation, establishing that prior knowledge influences students' capacity to learn fresh material. It is easier for students to learn complex material when they have a basic comprehension of the subject, according to DAR and SZ.

Moreover, DAR told,

"Yes, because there is already an understanding of the material." (DAR, script 1, line 56, interview data)

While SZ added,

"Of course, because we already know the basics." (SZ, script 2, line 45, interview data)

Neither AA and MRF made the same point, telling that a basic comprehension aids integration of more complex materials. Students'

ability to make connections between new theories and previously learned material proves how schemata activation influences learning development. As AA said,

"Yes, a basic understanding makes it easier for me to learn advanced material." (AA, script 6, line 53, interview data)

MRF also explained,

"Yes, I find it easier if I already have a basic understanding of the topic of the material." (MRF, script 12, line 36, interview data)

This means that when learning is organized around students' past knowledge, experiences, and interests, the teaching-learning process becomes more meaningful, relevant, and understandable. This emphasizes the significance of teachers recognizing and activating students' schemata when constructing learning activities that address their background requirements.

2.) *Students Satisfaction*

The majority of students had a solid understanding of the subjects being taught, following the findings of observations made in two separate classes that use personalized learning. This has been shown by the students' accurate completion of tasks, active participation in class discussions, and capacity to rephrase the material in their own terms. Throughout the activity or during the discussion, the teacher also gave direct feedback, which may acquire terms of classification, comprehension strengthening, or an encouragement to think more

critically. This condition displays that the teacher's feedback enhances students' comprehension of the subject and boosts into their enjoyment of the educational process.

When student interviews are conducted in more detail, the relation between observation data and students' schemata factors in differentiated learning becomes apparent. Almost all students responded in the affirmative regarding the question while getting enough prior knowledge made them feel more satisfied with varied learning. AA expressed,

“Prior knowledge helps me understand the material tailored to my abilities.” (AA, script 6, line 54, interview data)

Which is in line with SRO's statement that,

“Yes, if you learn according to your ability, it will be easier to understand.” (SRO, script 9, line 57, interview data)

It is apparent through this statement that existing knowledge serves as a crucial basis for absorbing new knowledge. Likewise, MRF reported that,

“Yes, I feel more satisfied with a sufficient knowledge base during the learning process.” (MRF, script 12, line 38, interview data)

And ESI even mentioned learning activities that are compatible with an individual's abilities improves learning and quickens up comprehension.

“Yes, I feel more satisfied, learning according to my ability helps my learning process, makes learning lighter and speeds up my understanding.” (ESI, script 13, line 56, interview data)

Besides that, it was discovered that students' learning satisfaction was impacted by the connection between the learning materials and their experiences and interests. Due to the interviews, the majority of students believed that it was useful when teachers gave them the chance to participate in class discussions that were related to their own interests and experiences. DAR identified the significance of learning being relevant to the personal interests and experiences by stating,

“Including, because if I study but not according to my interests, abilities, and experiences, I can feel lazy to study because the learning will be very torturous and pressurize me.” (DAR, script 1, line 61, interview data)

This remark reveals how a lack of connection to personal schemata may decrease motivation and learning satisfaction. MHA also declared that he had previously struggled to understand the content but was assisted by the differentiation approach, which related learning to personal experiences.

“Yes, I feel that way because before there was a learning system like this I sometimes found it difficult to understand the learning material.” (MHA, script 3, line 39, interview data)

MHR also emphasized the importance of teacher-student interaction as a way for teachers to understand students' personalities and experiences, leading to more meaningful learning experiences.

"Of course, because students and teachers must be open to each other so that the teacher can better understand the character of the student." (MHR, script 4, line 34, interview data)

Only one exception was from SZ, who remarked,

"Not really." (SZ, script 2, line 50, interview data)

This also confirms that not all students believe that relevance to interests and experiences may lead to student satisfaction in their schemata. Fortunately, the majority of students asserted when learning is linked to personal experiences and schemata, their degree of learning satisfaction rises dramatically.

In the setting of differentiated learning, this research reinforces the connection between students' schemata and learning satisfaction. In terms of helping students understand what they learn more quickly, schemas and past knowledge also directly affect how satisfied they are with the learning process. Students feel valued, motivated, and more confident when the teacher's educational material fits for their level of ability and experience. Since the teacher's feedback has precedent in the students' prior framework of concepts, it becomes more useful and important.

2. Challenge discovered by teachers in putting differentiated learning strategies in an Independent Curriculum for ELT

Teachers encounter genuine obstacles when attempting to apply differentiated learning within the framework of independence curriculum for English language teaching, which directly affects how well the teaching-learning process works. Importantly, the primary obstacles is time and effort in preparing and designing the learning process.

Creating and designing educational resources to suit students' different needs and learning preferences takes a lot more time and work than conventional teaching methods. Teachers need to analyze students' individual needs, create various learning options, and ensure every design still references learning objectives. As a result of this workload, teachers are under pressure, frequently colliding with administrative requirements and time limits.

a. Time and effort in preparing and designing the learning process.

The time and effort needed to plan and prepare the learning process is one of the significant challenges teachers face when implementing differentiated learning strategies in the independence curriculum. Based on the findings of interviews with grade 9 English teacher. it was discovered that teachers truly struggled with the time and effort needed to plan the learning process. As the teacher stated,

"I use my evening break to make lesson plans when I am not teaching in class." (English teacher, script 16, line 1, interview data)

The statement shows the workload required to create differentiated instruction cannot be completely fulfilled during regular business hours. This requirement also affects how teachers balance their personal and professional lives, though in this case, the informant claimed to have been able to effectively manage his time so that he was not forced to sacrifice other facets of other personal or professional aspects. This demonstrates how much time commitment is necessary for high-quality learning design. This shows that quality learning design requires a lot of time dedication.

The teacher who also uses a few methods to learning strategies depends on the kinesthetic, visual, and auditory learning styles of the students to help fulfill their varied learning needs and create engaging lesson plans. She explains,

“First of all, I want to make sure that the students' learning is effective and fun. So, I use 3 strategies, the first is auditorial for students who are more interested in learning that uses more sound, for example listening to stories, songs and direct explanations. Then the second is kinesthetic, where students are invited to directly practice what they learn, for example in learning text procedure material, students directly make something while explaining the steps and materials used. The third strategy is visual, students will be shown with the material that I show on the blackboard or screen in the form of interesting writings and pictures. And of course I also combine traditional learning methods known to students and incorporate technology as contemporary learning.” (English teacher, script 16, line 3, interview data)

By integrating these three methods, teachers aim to establish learning opportunities that are adaptive to students' needs. In addition to demonstrating teachers' understanding of differentiated instruction based on students' learning styles and needs. Teachers have to accommodate the various learning styles of their students, which requires more preparation time than an overall strategy. This demonstrates equally detailed and effective planning.

However, the lack of time remain to be a significant barrier. In response to a question about how the teacher manages the time limits and the demand for comprehensive lesson plans, the teacher disclosed that she typically creates lesson plans at the start of the semester, before active teaching and learning activities have started.

“Usually, I will make a lesson plan at the beginning of the semester, which is when students are not yet actively learning (i.e. during the new student orientation period).”

(English Teacher, script 16, line 14, interview data)

This reveals an adaptability to the reality of time management, as teachers strategically take advantage of the early school year time gap to anticipate the upcoming workload.

Teachers clearly responded that it was not ideal because of the unpredictability of teaching information at the start of the school year when questioned further about whether the time given was enough to construct lesson plans. As the teacher explained in the interview,

“In my opinion, it is not enough, because we educators only find out what level we will be teaching when we enter the new school year, so we end up using the shortest time possible at the beginning of the semester or before the semester break.” (English Teacher, script 16, line 16, interview data)

Due to delays with classroom duty information directly affecting instructors' preparation time, this implies that there is an imbalance between the need for detailed planning and the structural reality of the scheduling and teaching assignment distribution system that teachers must deal with. Despite this, the teacher has a solution to get throughout this, which is to use the previously owned draft or draft lesson plan as a guide that is then modified to meet the needs of the class being taught.

“Because we already have a draft lesson plan, so when we are faced with a short time, we just make the initial lesson plan as a benchmark, then we develop it for the next lesson plan.” (English Teacher, script 16, line 20, interview data)

This means is an attempt at efficiency, it depends on previous designs, while at the same times reveals time restrictions in terms of creativity and flexibility.

Even though creating lesson plans requires a lot of time and effort, the teacher declared that he had divided his time as well as possible and that he never put work ahead of his personal life. In the interview, the teacher said, specifically,

"Never, because I have divided my time as best as possible for that matter." (English Teacher, script 16, line 23, interview data)

While this statement points out effective time management, it can also mean that teachers are still attempting to maintain a balance between work and life in the face of a heavy workload, which can be stressful on its own as the demands of the independence curriculum become more complex. This also signifies that teachers are under internal pressure to employ intense time management in order to fulfill the needs of differentiated learning while dealing with structural challenges like unpredictable schedule and heavy workloads.

The results of these interviews collectively show that creating lesson plans within the framework of differentiated learning requires a significant dedication of time and effort, in along with the ability to create flexible and responsive to students' needs. But issues like time limits and poor communication about class schedules force teachers to be creative and flexible. The teacher do this by repurposing old teaching resources, using their own time, and creating effective strategies that belong to differentiated learning principles. This finding also relates to the research question about the difficulties teachers encounter when integrating differentiated instruction into the independent curriculum, particularly when it comes to organizing and creating the learning process, which ultimately involves considerable time, effort, and instructional strategy adaptations.

B. Discussion

The researcher conducted qualitative research by collecting data through the case study approach. After analyzing and getting the previously reported results, the researcher elaborated on the topic in this section. The main purpose of this research is to deliver answers to the research questions formulated in the context of this study. This section contains a discussion of the findings. The researcher organizes this section by focusing on the following research questions while describing the findings, which are:

1. What are the factors of differentiated learning within an independent curriculum that contribute to students' progress and satisfaction with ELT?
2. What are the challenges were discovered by teachers in putting differentiated learning strategies in an Independent Curriculum for ELT?

Several points regarding the theory were made to show theoretical support for the findings, and data was collected through observations and interviews associated with the theory in Chapter 2 to resolve the research questions. The following is a review and explanation of the two research questions mentioned above.

1. Factors of differentiated learning within an independent curriculum contribute to students' progress and satisfaction with ELT.

The researcher applied the theory of Lavania and Mohamad Nor (2021), to investigate the factors influencing students' differentiated learning in the independent curriculum. These factors include students attitude, motivation, confidence, proficiency gaps, and schemata.

a. Students attitude

The findings of this study are based on observations and interviews. The study discovered that students' attitudes toward learning influence their achievement. Students display positive attitudes by actively participating in class during discussions and responses to ask or answer questions with their teacher. Fadhilah and Andrian (2025) pointed out that students participating actively is a crucial sign of 21st century learning success since it shows how engaged students are with the subject matter and how well teachers are able to create a supportive environment which fulfills the needs of the students. This approach not only improves learning outcomes, but it also helps students improve their communication and teamwork skills. Differentiated learning can be an effective method to boost the engagement of students and overall learning outcomes.

This is confirmed by the students' opinions, which show that they believe in themselves and that the learning method that best suits their particular learning preferences significantly enhances their understanding, comfort level, and desire to take part more actively in the learning process. Referring from Tomlinson in (Fadhilah and Andrian, 2025) differentiated learning is a teaching method in which subject content is adapted to individual students' abilities, passions, and requirements. This technique encourages students to feel engaged in the learning process by allowing them to figure out topics or methods of learning that are appropriate for their interests and abilities.

In order to emphasize the significance of keeping a balance in the level of difficulty of the material, it was discovered that information that is too simple decreases cognitive engagement, but material that is too challenging can produce emotional suppression. In regard to this, differentiated learning, which can accurately detect and adjust the level of difficulty, is crucial to progress for students. This is consistent with the findings from Dia and Syah (2022), which states that too easy questions do not motivate learners to work hard to solve them. In contrast, too difficult questions will discourage learners and drain their motivation for trying again since they are out of availability.

In keeping with the researcher's observations in the classroom, students who participated in the classroom learning looked comfortable and calm in interacting with friends and teachers, displaying no signs of hesitation or pressure in the learning process. This is validated by the interview results, indicating that positive attitudes have an effect on student satisfaction, such as how pleased they are to interact in class, they feel more relaxed and enjoy learning when it is designed to their preferences. Zahara et al. (2019) describe good social interaction between students as developing respect for each other, creating a comfortable learning environment, and encouraging students to do well in the classroom. Students with this positive attitude not only automatically follow the learning process, but they like it, completing every step for enhanced learning satisfaction. This strategy also improves

the effectiveness and efficiency of learning by giving a more engaging and meaningful experience.

b. Students motivation

In this situation, the researcher discovered that students shown great initiative, as the majority were actively learning independently and were not afraid to ask questions. Students' statements reflect this, as they feel more engaged, interested, and less pressured to learn independently when tasks or materials are tailored to their needs and interests, increasing their enthusiasm for learning. In contrast, only a few students choose to wait for the teacher to direct them. Based on the term by Dessuko (2024) independent learning is not individualized learning, but a process of learning that requires a person's independence to learn, or learning to gain information that is not controlled by others. With the development of learning independence, students learn better, are able to arrange learning effectively and efficiently, and find it easier to participate in learning so that student learning objectives are fulfilled.

Moreover, it was apparent that students arrived on time for the English lesson and constantly engaged from start to finish. This accurate attendance can be seen as a strong motivation to attend class. The researcher found no sign of intentionally delay or absence. This disciplined mindset can be understood as a form of self-control and internal motivation for students to do the best they can with their study. This points out the importance of motivation in familiarizing students with learning

disciplines. Learning motivation will help students overcome their tiredness, hesitation, and skipping behavior. Students who exhibit motivating behavior and learning discipline will encourage and develop optimum degrees of learning potential and achievement. Students who are disciplined in their learning and have learning motivation are constantly serious and focused on participating in classroom learning; they arrive on time and always observe school rules; and they study consistently and meaningfully at home. Students that are disciplined in learning will be spotted to have regular study time, learn little by little, finish assignments on time, and study in a supportive environment, which is consistent with the statement from (Amrizal et al., 2020).

In terms of enthusiasm for completing tasks, it was discovered that they were able to do that quickly, due certainly to social support from classmates, which had a positive effect on their development toward a deeper knowledge of the content. As explained by research from Kusnah et al. (2023) social support among friends is described as serving good support in the form of emotional attention, respect, and helpful to peers of similar ages or maturity levels. This is visible in the opinions of several students, who stated that learning based on their degree of comprehension will allow them to focus more on comprehending the concept of the subject rather than just a brief understanding. In contrast, a few students completed activities because they were supposed to. This demonstrates that there are variances in motivation between students.

The researcher also discovered that students expressed interest in the information given by the teacher, but not always directly. They pay great attention to the teacher's explanations and ask a few questions. Although certain students are more inactive, their behavior still reveals interest, perhaps in a quieter way. When assigned a task, students complete it quickly and without much instruction, indicating their interest and engagement in the subject. This is confirmed by study from Mulyati and Novita (2019) which highlights that there are three indications of interest, as the researchers have determined, which are: 1) students' attention in teaching and learning activities, including paying attention to the teacher's explanation during learning; 2) active participation of students in teaching and learning activities, such as asking the teacher; and 3) enjoyment of teaching and learning activities, which as being responsible for assignments.

Students that are motivated equally internally and externally are more actively engaged and interested in the subject matter, as well as satisfied with the learning process and outcomes. The in-depth interview findings indicate how delighted students are when their teacher truly helps them understand the material. This demonstrates how the teacher's role as a facilitator and support system influences learning motivation. Revealed in the theory from Masyitoh et al. (2024) teachers serve as facilitators in the context of active learning, creating a learning environment in which students can actively participate, explore, and realize their full potential

without fear of failure. Teachers become mentors for students, assisting them in overcoming academic and emotional hurdles to learning. It is possible to conclude that practically all students are motivated when learning involves interaction, especially active involvement in groups or individually, practical experience, and a pleasing situation, all of which can lead to a meaningful and rewarding learning experience.

In addition, when checked if they were comfortable with their classmates influencing their learning, the researcher discovered that most students recognized the important impact of social motivation on their pleasure. Friends' encouragement or support boosted their confidence, enthusiasm, and sense of community throughout the learning process. In the research of Kusnah et al. (2023) classmates have a significant influence on self-control and conduct, even during the learning process. Friends guidance and assistance have a significant impact on learning motivation, whether it is positive or negative.

Social aspects in the classroom are likely to have an impact on students' motivation, which in turn influences their level of learning satisfaction. The existence of motivation in learning in students improves goal achievement. Student motivation in learning is a guidance for students to pursue learning, originating in a desire inside themselves to obtain satisfactory results as an outcome (Ramdhani & Sobandi, 2020).

c. Students confidence

This result implies that the majority of students are confident and are willing to ask questions or express their opinions in front of the class, even if some students still require guidance and assistance to present confidently in front of the class. After they dare to express their opinions, what boosts their confidence is receiving praise from teachers and classmates, which increases pleasure and satisfaction with themselves. This data point is supported by study from Mulyana et al. (2025) which demonstrates how teachers' encouragement and motivation contribute to students' self-confidence. Teachers usually give constructive feedback and support when students properly express their thoughts, even if they are not absolutely perfect.

It was also discovered that giving students in the classroom clear and specific directions might enhance their confidence, making them more engaged in studying. Teachers can provide clear instructions in classroom learning activities to ensure that every student feels valued and respected (Masyitoh et al., 2024).

Students also reported that if they believe in themselves, they will be braver to actively participate in class, and their learning progress will improve as a result. This is consistent with the ideology from Masyitoh et al. (2024) which states that students' self-confidence plays a critical role in their academic achievement and social skills development. Students with strong self-confidence are more driven, more engaged in studying, and

better able to deal with academic problems. As a result, active learning, which involves students in a variety of activities such as conversation, problem solving, and group collaboration, is critical for increasing students' confidence and academic performance.

The students completed the project and turned it in on time, but some of them were still unsure about the answers they had given themselves, so they seek confirmation from others that the answers they had given were accurate, and then collected them. A lack of self-confidence can affect the child's life path, as well as their academic performance. This lack of confidence can be influenced by a variety of things, including talent, achievement, physical fitness, and economic status. Following to the theory given by Odelia et al. (2023) that there are plenty of elements that influence students' self-confidence, it is possible to assume that this finding is influenced by a lack of confidence in students' skills or achievements.

The researcher then discovered through interviews with various students that self-confidence is one of the important factors influencing their learning satisfaction, which in turn affects their excitement to continue learning and attempting new things in order to be more satisfied with the results they obtain. When students develop self-confidence, their potential can be realized. With enough confidence, learning objectives can be fulfilled, allowing learners to do well and compete professionally (Enteding et al., 2024).

Owing to the findings, students who are confident in their abilities are more likely to re-explain the content to their friends who do not comprehend it, as well as complete difficult material. As noted by Wardani in (Enteding et al., 2024) one of the keys to successful learning is students' active participation in the learning process, which includes the bravery to express their thoughts and engage with professors and classmates.

Researchers discovered that learners with strong self-confidence are more happy with the learning process and outcomes because they have faith in their own abilities. Self-confidence is one of the mindsets that can help solve these challenges. Besides, self-confidence will serve as motivation for achieving success in problem-solving. As a result, the more a person's confidence in their own ability, the greater their motivation to complete their assignment (Zahrah & Febriani, 2021).

In contrast, doubt and lack of confidence drive students to be unsatisfied since they are unsure of their comprehension and dedication. This is confirmed by the idea of Elsa et al. (2022) which states that students who struggle to adjust to their surroundings and learning settings. Some students struggle to realize their full potential. Students are unable to realize their full potential because they believe they are unable to do activities in front of the class or that they are not smarter than their peers.

As a result, actions to boost students' self-confidence need to be prioritized in the learning process in order to increase overall satisfaction and outcomes. The findings also underline the importance of teachers

being active in increasing students' self-confidence through ways customized to their specific skill capacities.

d. Students proficiency gaps

Researchers discovered that learners are not always able to comprehend the material offered, particularly if the topic or job seems tough to complete. The majority of students still require further assistance to fully comprehend the concepts taught by the teacher. This shows up by the behavior of students who seek help in a variety of methods, including asking friends, discussing, looking for more sources of information, and asking the teacher directly. They usually try things on their own initially, then seek assistance from friends and teachers if they run into any further challenges. This is confirmed by the statement Ramdhani and Sobandi (2020), who proves that learning materials bring fresh insights into learning, allowing the learning process to run smoothly and effectively. With educational resources, students can readily gain new knowledge and insights from anything they want to know without feeling as if they lack information. Sources that are often used for learning include materials that contain guidelines or instructions and can be used in teaching and learning activities to help students learn.

Due to the participants in the interviews, having support from friends, teachers, and other educational resources helped students understand the topic, increase their learning achievement, and build an enjoyment of learning. Friend social support refers to peers' desire to bring comfort to

others in the same society by caring about them and appreciating them. Learning motivation will be decrease if peer social support is weaker. In the reverse situation, the more the social support of peers, the higher the student's motivation to learn (Oktavia & Dewi, 2021). Then, teachers who can create a conducive learning atmosphere, offer emotional support, and recognize students' individual characteristics can help pupils reach their full potential. In the long term, this not only boosts students' enthusiasm to learn, but it also helps them build social and emotional skills that will be useful in their future lives (Nurjali and Marfuah, 2024). Learning resources include any sources of people, data, procedures, and media utilized in learning that students might use to enhance learning activities. Learning resources can take the form of learning assistance as raw materials to support learning, such as books, teachers, newspapers, television, the environment, and the internet, as mentioned by Samsinar in (Pembayun et al., 2023). However, when faced with tough material, a few students give up and make little effort to complete the task. This conveys how students' responses to learning challenges have differences considerably depending on their attitudes and learning methods, which is where the gap between students exists.

The researcher's observations in class exposed that when students got stuck or frustrated by questions or content that they did not comprehend, they displayed gloomy, confused, and even frustrated facial expressions. Someone who lacks motivation is more likely to put in the bare minimum

of effort when carrying out a task, particularly while at work or in education (Irfan and Imran, 2024). Then, as described by Zuni Nuraini in (Irfan and Imran, 2024) when there is a lack of social support, unpleasant feelings typically appear, preventing the development of learning motivation. The negative emotions might cause students to become more frustrated, pessimistic, unable to provide energy, lack of discipline, and lose directions or goals in the learning process, disturbing their learning focus. On the other side, when the content or task was relatively simple, their expressions became peaceful, with no signs of fear or uncertainty, and they completed the assignment or remembered the information quickly.

When presented with fresh knowledge, many students act confused especially if the teacher does not provide additional explanation, yet they continue to discuss the material with their peers to fulfill comprehend of it. Difficulty in completing tough activities or challenges has a significant impact on the grasp of the subject matter, causing people to focus more and think critically in order to better understand the subject matter. Difficulties of thinking are defined as the inability to use cognitive abilities such as the ability to comprehend concepts when addressing problems. Difficulties of thinking creates challenges in learning (Grazella et al., 2022). Zulkarnain et al. (2016) additionally claimed that humans must constantly be ready to face with overcome difficulties that develop as a result of changes in several aspects of life. The problems that arise are challenges that must be

carried out, thus a variety of skills are needed, particularly critical thinking, communication, and problem solving.

To improve learning outcomes and bridge the ability gap in the classroom, classroom instruction suited to students' needs and capabilities should be implemented.

The researcher then identified a significant difference between the two classes that influenced the establishment of laziness in themselves. Students in class 9A, which has an English study schedule in the morning, seem to prefer and be more active than in class 9B, which has an afternoon schedule. The difference is reinforced by more explanation by Lestari in (Azis and Ali, 2019). Some pupils are more concentrated and focused when learning in the morning since they are still fresh and eager to learn. While during studying in the afternoon, many students are exhausted from studying in the morning and are no longer interested in the learning process; others even fall asleep. However, this is not relevant to all students; some are unaffected by the variation in learning time. Akbar et al. (2020) additionally reported that learning in the afternoon and evening causes many students to complain about tiredness because the body is supposed to rest during the day but is still used for learning. Similarly, the classroom environment is becoming noisier or noisier, unlike in the morning when you are still focused on learning.

The study also discovered a difference in how students deal with tough material, with some feeling quite joyful and fulfilled after finishing a

difficult job since it drives them to think more deeply. They believe that finishing tough material effectively gives them a greater sense of accomplishment than simple chores that do not provide important educational experiences. This shows the attitude of self-acceptance expressed by Zahrah and Febriani (2021) which is an attitude that reflects a sense of pleasure in relation to individual's own reality. This attitude reflects pleasure with the characteristic of actual self-ability. Students who are satisfied with their own qualities are more likely to feel comfortable, not disappointed, and aware of what they need. This lets them to be independent and not rely on others to make objective decisions. Then, in keeping with Sari and Wahjudi (2021) additionally to being thought to improve and raise student learning achievement, the intensity of assignments is regarded to be able to influence students' learning motivation.

However, when faced with challenging material or assignments, some students' confidence decreases, but they feel more engaged and focused when completing simple material because the pressure is decreased. Avianti et al. (2021) says that people with poor self-efficacy have a tendency to give up easily in difficult situations. Individuals with high self-efficacy will work harder to solve current obstacles. Self-efficacy is the ability to plan and carry out some of the tasks required to obtain the goals being achieved. In the end, it is ensured that students will feel more confident and motivated when the material is appropriate for their skill

level, however when the difficulty level of the material does not match their ability, students will become confused, frustrated, and even lazy. In this circumstances, differentiated learning must accommodate for the different capabilities of students who have stronger academic abilities and be supplemented by adaptive learning methodologies.

e. Students schemata

Researchers discovered that most students realized the significance of having prior knowledge to help them understand a fresh topic, which connects and facilitates learning with new material. According to the view of constructivist theory in Shofiyah (2016) learning as a building process. Students use their prior knowledge to arrange existing material in a variety of ways to produce new knowledge, which is then placed into multiple contexts.

It was also shown that some students occasionally forgot earlier material, showing that prior knowledge does not simply return to memory without development or support, but must be triggered through specific procedures, such as reviewing the material to recall current knowledge. It was discovered as well that each student processes and adapts the content differently based on their existing knowledge. This is consistent with the theory of Hasanuddin (2020), which states that in an ideal world, individuals have a solid foundation of prior knowledge that can connect their initial knowledge to their new knowledge, allowing them to construct their knowledge structure. Despite this, individuals are not always able to

form spontaneous connections between their initial knowledge and what they are experiencing. In other words, if the initial knowledge is not active, it cannot facilitate the integration of new knowledge.

The findings also show how learning is easier for students to understand when it is tied to things or facts that they encounter in everyday life. In simpler terms, learning that is applied to real-world situations helps students understand the topic. On top of that, the researcher discovered that the relationship between learning materials and students' experiences and interests in materials related to real-world situations influences their learning satisfaction, as students' experiences make them feel more at ease and simpler to understand the material. As noted by Muhartini et al. (2023), the findings above indicate contextual learning, which is a lesson that connects everyday contextual to learning materials so that students can interpret the knowledge or skills they learn and apply the knowledge or skills they have from one problem or context to another.

Students will learn difficult material more quickly if they have a basic comprehension of it, illustrating how schema activation helps to increase learning progress. It may be concluded that organizing learning based on students' prior knowledge, experiences, and interests makes the teaching and learning process more meaningful, relevant, and understandable.

Then, in terms of how students' schemata influence their learning pleasure, it was discovered that having enough prior understanding made them feel more engaged with diversified learning. These findings prove

that previous information serves as a vital foundation for absorbing new knowledge. A lack of prior knowledge about the learning topic being studied may reduce students' motivation and learning satisfaction. In the view of Harso et al. (2021), the learning process will continue smoothly if students' initial knowledge matches the new knowledge gained throughout learning. But if the student's previous understanding does not match the new knowledge he has received, misconceptions arise, causing learning barriers. Wherever someone is not motivated to learn, fresh information obtained from learning activities will be difficult to understand. Motivation as a mental force and an influence for learning must be continuously developed in students so that the learning outcomes achieved can be highly satisfying where before the implementation of the differentiation approach by linking learning with experience as it is now, students often find it difficult to understand the material.

How learners schemata, or prior knowledge, aids their comprehension of fresh material in the classroom. Schemata are crucial in differentiated learning because students from diverse backgrounds approach the topic material differently.

2. Challenges discovered by teachers in putting differentiated learning strategies in an Independent Curriculum for ELT

a. Time and effort in preparing and designing the learning process

In relation to the findings, Challenges that the teacher faces in terms of the time and effort required to plan and prepare the learning process is that

she uses her rest time at night to make lesson plans, which requires her to manage her time effectively so that her personal life and work are balanced without being left behind. This is consistent with the remark from Sari et al. (2024), that good work-life balance is required to attain maximum performance. Those who have enough time to manage work and personal life can achieve and maintain a balance between duties and positions at home and work, which is pleasing for both.

The teacher also explained that the strategy used to ensure that the lesson plan is effective and engaging is to use visual, auditory and kinesthetic methods which are in line with how differentiated learning is implemented which aims to create a learning process that is adaptive to students' needs. Azizah and Widyartono (2024) provide greater detail on approaches to learning such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. First, visual learning style prefer pictures and text. Teachers use a variety of visual aids, including as columns, symbols, figures, and colored diagrams, to help students gain knowledge. Visual tools, such as concept maps, can also serve to provide a comprehensive representation of the topic being taught. Furthermore, they prefer to read for themselves rather than have others read to them, and they read passionately and quickly. The second learning style is auditorial, in which understanding is absorbed through listening, such as from a teacher's explanation or interaction with classmates, instead of reading books. They want a pleasant and calm environment in which to listen to explanations or information presented

without distractions via teacher, discussions, or listening audio recordings. The third learning approach is kinesthetic, which involves direct experience and physically interaction. They find it simpler to grasp and recognize knowledge when they may actively execute or try something directly connected to the idea under discussion. For example, students may benefit from hands-on activities, experiments, or simulations. They frequently take advantage of activities such as role-playing, field projects, and physical exercises.

However, when asked about the way they balance the requirement for complete lesson plans with time constraints, teachers disclosed that they typically create lesson plans at the start of the semester, before active teaching and learning activities begin. This highlights that teachers can plan strategically by allocating time at the start of the new school year to anticipate the upcoming workload. Due to Paramita and Afandi (2024) by appropriately splitting their time, teachers can minimize the stress associated with overwork, allowing them to maintain their mental and physical health.

Although the teacher can manage her time well, the teacher also remarked that the time is not optimal because there is an imbalance at the school between the scheduling and teaching assignment system and the requirement to prepare complex lesson plans. Scheduling plays a significant social role in educational institutions, but the process of arranging a schedule can be difficult due to a variety of challenges (Al

Hilmi et al., 2024). The teacher's teaching schedule frequently modifies at the start of the semester due to class changes, determining the number of teachers, the number of classes and subjects, and estimating the number of hours for each teacher by confirming the schedule with the teacher initially, and monitoring one by one the empty teacher's schedule, is a long process and takes a long time every time it desire to plan teacher teaching activities, causing slow shipping of the teacher (Wardani and Syahputra, 2023).

In regard with the above, the researcher noticed that teachers had no idea what level they would be teaching right before they began the new school year, therefore they used the shortest periods of time possible at the start of the semester or before the semester break to create lesson plans, as previously described.

Nonetheless, the teacher has a means to overcome this challenge: use a previously saved or owned draft or lesson plan as a reference, which is then adjusted to fulfill the demands of the class to be taught. This also emphasizes how teachers must be creative and flexible when planning lessons. The final lesson plan format is a modification or revision of the previous versions. The supporting and limiting elements for the application of lesson plans in the field will be utilized as a guide for constructing lesson plan formats in the following curriculum (Yusnaldi et al., 2021). Teachers must think creatively and innovatively while establishing methods, learning materials, media, and learning strategies to

increase the quality of education in schools. Teachers in the modern era must keep up with the latest developments in teaching methods and learning media (Sulistiyani et al., 2021).

In creating lesson plans that involve a significant amount of time and energy, the researcher discovered that the instructor never prioritized lesson preparation and planning above other elements of her personal life since she had effectively separated her time. Silalahi et al. (2023) defines time management as an individual's effort and action to manage himself by using time as productively and effectively as possible by determining objectives and demands, arranging and organizing schedules, controlling time, and the ability to be organized in both professional and personal life to achieve specific goals.

The findings above discuss and explain in detail the challenges teachers face when applying differentiated learning into the independent curriculum, particularly when it comes to organizing and creating lesson plans, which require a significant amount of time, effort, and adaptation of teaching strategies.

3. Support from fellow teachers in Implementing Differentiated Learning

In this case, researchers found that teachers have never experienced things like other teachers not wanting to provide or share knowledge, because implementing thematic learning in this school implies teachers to collaborate across subjects. Sa'diah et al. (2024) explains the way thematic learning combines multiple basic competencies, results of learning, and indicators

from a topic, or perhaps several subjects, with the goal of identifying effective ways that teachers can use to construct thematic learning subjects. Saputri et al. (2023) also added this collaboration additionally helps teachers understand and utilize the relevant educational standards. This statement encourages teachers for exchanging ideas and learning strategies that contribute to the achievement of differentiated learning.

Teachers additionally emphasized that this collaboration profited the wellness of teachers and has a positive impact on the working environment; teachers try to encourage, help, support, and collaborate to find solutions to problems they face, implying that the statement about a lack of support from other teacher colleagues is not necessary because it is covered by strong cooperation among teachers. According to Juhri and Suhardi (2023) effective collaboration will impact each person's ability to accomplish their job. Saputri et al. (2023) emphasized further that a work team develops beneficial synergy through coordinated efforts. Discussing and engaging together with other teachers in designing lesson plans might help overcome difficulties and find fresh ideas.

The researcher discovered another viewpoint that support from other teachers who use creative and flexible collaboration facilitates the successful achievement of differentiated learning strategies in the independent curriculum, leading to the idea that the issue of lack of peer support does not significantly affect teachers in this school. Teachers engage to enhance their teaching and learning techniques, share ideas, and create materials and

evaluations for students. Thus, teacher collaboration becomes a space where teachers can engage, open up, and support one another in improving educational quality Rusyiana and Marpaung, 2023).