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# Managing Differentiated Learning Process in Implementing Emancipated Curriculum at Thailand - Indonesian School

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**ABSTRACT**

The policy of Emancipated curriculum is implemented to accelerate the achievement of the national education goals. Moreover, this curriculum is not only implemented in Indonesia but also in Indonesian Schools which located abroad. The focus of this research is directed towards (a) differentiated learning planning at the Indonesian School in Bangkok (SIB), Thailand; (b) implementation of differentiated learning at the SIB, Thailand; and (c) evaluation of differentiated learning at the SIB, Thailand. This study conducted three data collection techniques, including: (1) interviews; (2) documentation; and (3) observation. The data were then processed using NVivo 12. The result of this research is that the learning in the SIB, Thailand is designed by taking into account the developmental stages and the current level of achievement of students. It is aligned with the learning needs and reflects the diverse characteristics and development of students, making the learning meaningful and enjoyable. Moreover, SIB Thailand highly prioritizes future-oriented and sustainable learning.

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## INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is a description of the vision, mission, and educational objectives of an institution or educational organization. It serves as the central framework for the values that will be imparted to the students to achieve educational goals. For teachers, the curriculum functions as a guide in conducting the learning process. For school or madrasah principals and supervisors, the curriculum serves as a guide for supervision and oversight. For parents, the curriculum serves as a guide in guiding their children's learning at home. For the community, the curriculum serves as a guide to providing support for the educational process in schools or madrasahs. As for students, the curriculum functions as a guide in carrying out learning activities.

Covid-19 pandemic gave a systemic impact on education in Indonesia, specifically addressing the learning setbacks and the longstanding learning crisis. It underscores the Ministry of Education and Culture's (Kemendikbudristek) initiatives to tackle these challenges through the introduction of the "Curriculum Emancipated" (Emancipated Curriculum). This curriculum aims to provide diverse intracurricular learning opportunities, allowing students to delve into concepts and enhance their competencies. The policy of Emancipated learning is driven by the objective of expediting the attainment of national educational goals, particularly elevating the global competitiveness of Indonesia's human resources. The curriculum is crafted to offer flexibility for teachers to select various teaching tools, adapting the learning process to the unique

needs and interests of students. Ultimately, the aim is to cultivate highly competent individuals with noble character and advanced reasoning skills, especially in literacy and numeracy.

The decision to implement the policy of Emancipated learning is justified by the inflexibility and inefficacy of existing educational regulations, coupled with the need to address the diverse conditions and challenges faced by different schools. The text underscores the adaptability of the new policy to overcome these challenges. Additionally, the "Curriculum Emancipated" introduces a fresh and improved approach compared to previous curricula. It challenges educators to comprehensively grasp the concepts of this curriculum to effectively impart them to students. The curriculum emphasizes varied learning approaches centered around essential content, providing students with ample time to comprehend concepts and bolster competencies. The overarching goal is to nurture freedom of thought and Emancipated thinking, particularly among educators.

Lastly, the significance of understanding how differentiated learning management is implemented within the Emancipated Curriculum, not only in Indonesia but also in Indonesian schools abroad, using the Indonesian School in Bangkok, Thailand (SIB Thailand) as an example. Based on the previous description, this study aims to portray the management process of differentiated learning including: (a) planning of differentiated learning management within the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand; (b) implementation of differentiated learning management within the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand; and (c) evaluation of differentiated learning management within the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative research approach, specifically a single case study. As known, case studies are conducted to investigate phenomena bound by time and place, possessing uniqueness, and not occurring in other research locations. SIB Thailand has been using the Emancipated Curriculum since 2022 and has implemented differentiated learning. As one of the Indonesian Schools Abroad, SIB Thailand is progressive and at the forefront of Emancipated Curriculum implementation. The learning activities under the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB emphasize diplomatic activities not typically found in other schools. This uniqueness is a distinctive value and aligns with SIB Thailand's vision to prepare students according to expected competencies, especially related to 21st-century competencies, encompassing the 4Cs (Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity).

The researcher employs data collection techniques: (1) interviews; (2) documentation; and (3) observation. Data collection is conducted in a hybrid way, using both virtual platforms like Google Meet and field visits. Data collection through Google Meet is currently ongoing, and some data supporting the research focus has been obtained. Meanwhile, data collection through field visits was conducted from October to November 2023. Furthermore, the validity of the data is evaluated using four criteria: (1) transferability, (2) dependability, (3) credibility, and (4) confirmability. Following this, the data is processed utilizing Nvivo 12 software, including importing the data, coding it, visualizing the data, and making conclusions. All of the data that are collected through interviews, observation, and documentation are gathered and processed by Nvivo 12. Data are grouped and condensed into some kinds of data groups including the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating in differentiated learning. Furthermore, the use of cooding is aimed to ease the process of data grouping and visualizing. After all of the process, some words clouds and words threes from each focus of the study implied a result. At the end of data analysis, conclusions are made to determine a main finding of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The data for the research on differentiated learning management in the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand was obtained through three data collection techniques: Interviews,

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documentation, and observation. This data was analyzed using Nvivo 12, which subsequently generated keywords in this study and described them in the following word cloud.

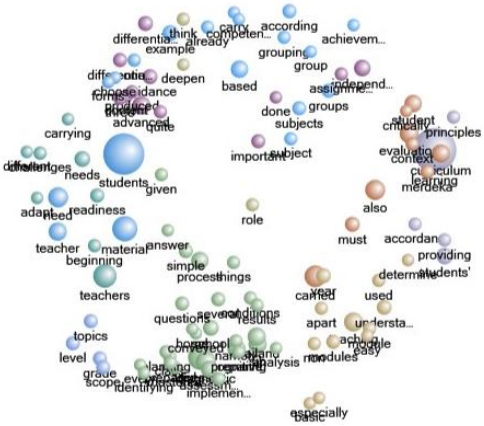


**Figure 1.** Word cluster diagram of differentiated learning management in SIB


**Figure 2.** Word cloud of differentiated learning management in SIB

Based on the Figure 1 and 2, the concentration of the word "leaarning" reached a percentage of 4.10%; the word "students" accounted for 1.88%; the word "assessment" was mentioned 1.37% of the time, and the word "diagnostic" appeared at a rate of 1.19%. Using this data, an analysis was conducted on the most frequently occurring words as a representation of field data, which is depicted in a word cluster diagram (Figure 1). The following is the word cluster diagram that illustrates the relationships between words, allowing for the breakdown of data flow for each focus of the research.

Based on the word tree that emerged from the data analysis by Nvivo 12, it can be observed that the process of managing differentiated learning is broadly conducted by adapting to the school's conditions and internalizing Indonesian cultural values. This is done considering the new learning paradigm that focuses on students as the center of learning. The three stages undertaken, which are also the research focus, are planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. SIB's core values and Indonesian culture continue to guide the implementation of differentiated learning at SIB, even though the school is located in a different country with potentially different cultural norms. The details for each stage are outlined in the following description.

**Planning stage of differentiated learning in the emancipated curriculum at SIB Thailand.**
Data related to the planning of differentiated learning in the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand was obtained from interviews, documentation, and observation. Descriptions of the intersections of data from each informant and data collection technique are illustrated in the following Figure 3.


**Figure 3.** Word cloud of planning stage in differentiated learning at the SIB Thailand

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Based on the analysis results, the planning of differentiated learning management in the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand is broadly conducted by identifying the results of diagnostic assessments, both cognitive and non-cognitive, for students. This includes the development of teaching modules and the determination of formative and summative assessments. Figure 4 showed the word "learning" learning has the highest percentage from the data gathered through interviews, documentation, and observation, accounting for 4.04%. The word “diagnostic” has a percentage of 2.53%, the word “cognitive” reaches 2.02%, the word "modules" refers to teaching module is mentioned 1.52%, and the word "material" referring to the preparation of formative and summative assessments tailored to the characteristics of students is mentioned 0.51%. The descriptive explanation of this word cloud is outlined in the following description.

The planning process of learning at SIB Thailand is conducted through several stages, namely: (a) cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessments; (b) analysis of diagnostic assessment results; (c) preparation of teaching modules; and (d) preparation of formative and summative assessments. Cognitive diagnostic assessments are conducted by teachers to assess the extent to which students have mastered the material related to what has been and will be learned. Cognitive diagnostic assessments play a significant role in preparing a learning process that suits the characteristics of students and the conditions of SIB Thailand, both internally and externally.

As mentioned by the Head of SIB Thailand, the implementation of cognitive diagnostic assessments includes: assessment implementation plans, identification of assessment materials, and the preparation of 10 simple questions. Reflective questions are also addressed in the preparation of cognitive diagnostic assessments, such as: (a) For which grade is this assessment made?; (b) Which subject or topic will be assessed in this assessment?; (c) When will this assessment be given to all students in the class?; (d) Is it at the beginning of the school year or every month after learning starts?; (e) Where will the assessment be conducted? At home or at school?; (f) How will the assessment be carried out: If at home, how will it be done? If at school, what needs to be prepared by the teacher?. Relevant information is also provided by 1st and 4th-grade teachers at SIB Thailand, where the diagnostic assessment process is prepared by referring to which material can be inserted as a measure of the depth of the material mastered by students. In line with the scope of the material that teachers must prepare when planning diagnostic assessments, teachers also prepare by identifying assessment materials. The scope includes: (a) What topics need to be understood by students at this grade level? Teachers can refer to textbooks to identify topics that need to be understood, especially for the upcoming semester; and (b) What knowledge and skills need to be mastered by students from the previous grade level, which are basic prerequisites that need to be mastered in order to participate in learning at their current grade level? Teachers can refer to textbooks from the previous grade level.

The implementation of diagnostic assessments is carried out periodically, specifically at the beginning of each new material scope. On the other hand, the implementation of non-cognitive diagnostic assessments is carried out at least once a year at SIB Thailand. The purpose of providing these assessments is to determine the readiness of students to face the learning process, especially in the new school year. Additionally, these assessments can help teachers understand the learning styles, emotional conditions, and psychological conditions of SIB Thailand students. The analysis results, both cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessments, are then used as the basis for the preparation of teaching modules. SIB Thailand teachers prepare teaching modules based on several aspects, including: (a) Harmony between the components of the Teaching Module; (b) The Teaching Module uses simple, clear, easily understandable language and is not open to multiple interpretations; (c) The Teaching Module is easy to follow, allows for development, and is made accessible to the widest possible audience, including remote and underprivileged areas; (d) The Teaching Module focuses on students; and (e) It contains essential and important information as a reference for learning implementation.

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According to the informants, teaching modules adhere to principles such as: (a) According to developmental stages; (b) Learning is designed by considering the developmental stage and level of ability of students; (c) Learning is enjoyable and meaningful, creating a love for learning and building lifelong learners; (d) Developing competencies and character, the learning process supports the holistic development of students' competencies and character; (e) Relevant, learning designed according to the context of the students' environment and culture, involving parents and the community as partners; and (f) Future-oriented, learning prepares students' abilities to face and adapt to life according to the times. Another informant mentioned that the next process is the preparation of assessments. The assessment preparation process includes: (a) integrated with the learning process, as feedback for educators, students, and parents to guide them in determining future learning strategies; (b) integrated with the learning process, as feedback for educators, students, and parents to guide them in determining future learning strategies; (c) simple and informative, developing character and competencies to be achieved, and providing follow-up strategies; (e) fair, valid, proportional, and reliable, designed fairly, proportionally, validly, and reliably to explain learning progress, determine decisions about steps, and as the basis for preparing the next learning program; and (f) Reflective, assessment results are used by students, educators, educational staff, and parents/guardians as reflective material to improve the quality of learning. The overall process is the stages that SIB Thailand teachers go through in planning learning. Emphasis is added to diplomatic activities in the learning activities in accordance with the uniqueness of SIB Thailand.

**Implementating stage of differentiated learning in the emancipated curriculum at SIB Thailand**

In the implementation stage of differentiated learning in the Emancipated Curriculum at SIB Thailand, key informants are involved, and three data collection techniques are employed to delve into how the process is carried out. In Figures 4, the intersection of data in the implementation of differentiated learning in the Emancipated Curriculum is described.

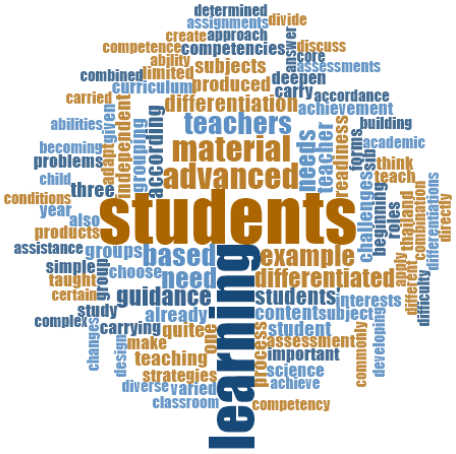


**Figure 4.** Word cloud of implementing stage in differentiated learning at the SIB Thailand

Furthermore, in the analysis of the word cloud, it is described that the word "students" reaches a percentage of 3.08%; the word "learning" referring to the process of learning in the school is 3.08%; the word "advanced" reaches 2.69%; the word "material" has a percentage of 1.54%; the word "guidance" shows a percentage of 0.77%; and the words "material", "differentiated", and "needs" all reach 0.38%.

The principles of Learning and Assessment indicate the importance of developing learning strategies according to the level of student achievement, also known as teaching at the right level (TaRL). This learning is done by providing varied learning materials according to the understanding of the students. The goal of this differentiation is to ensure that every child can achieve the expected learning objectives. Thus, competency-oriented learning requires varied and

periodic assessments. This approach is strongly emphasized in the Emancipated Curriculum. Based on the assessment results at the beginning of the learning process, teachers need to adjust learning strategies to match the learning needs of the students. However, for some teachers, implementing differentiated learning is not a simple task. Some teachers face challenges due to limited time to design different learning experiences based on individual student needs. Others may find it difficult to group students based on readiness due to a large number of students and limited classroom space. Therefore, teachers should adapt to their readiness and the conditions faced by educators. For the purpose of differentiated learning, students are grouped according to their achievement levels. Small group learning is a common method employed by students. Sometimes, teachers form groups based on interests (for example, common interests in sports games in the Physical Education subject), conduct observations or experiments in the Science subject in randomly assigned groups by educators, and so on, so grouping based on academic ability in a meeting is a common occurrence. Grouping based on ability changes according to the competencies that are the strengths of the students, is not permanent throughout the year or semester, and does not apply to all subjects. For example, in the Indonesian language subject, student A is grouped in a group that still needs guidance, but in the Science subject, student A is grouped in a group that is already proficient.

For students who are already proficient, various forms of challenges need to be considered. Being a peer tutor can be one option, but it should be considered that not all students have teaching competence, and the responsibility to facilitate remains entirely with the educator. There need to be various roles that can be chosen by students to enrich or deepen the competencies they have built. For example, at the beginning of the school year, teachers discuss with students about the roles needed, and each role can be taken by students in turn. In the learning process, one of the differentiations that teachers can do is based on content/material, process, and/or the product produced by students. For example, when teaching a specific topic, students who need guidance can focus on only the 3 (three) key points related to the material, while students who already understand the material can study the entire topic, and proficient students can delve into material beyond what is taught.

Examples of differentiated learning at SIB Thailand in implementing differentiated learning, teachers can choose one or a combination of the three ways: (a) Content (material to be taught): For students who need guidance, they can learn the 3 (three) most important things related to the material, for students who are quite proficient, they can learn the entire material, and for students who are already very proficient, enrichment can be provided; (b) Process (how to teach): The learning process and forms of guidance can be differentiated according to students' readiness. For students who need guidance, teachers need to teach directly. For students who are quite proficient, it can start with modeling combined with Emancipated work, practice, and review. For very proficient students, some prompts for Emancipated tasks can be given; and (c) Product (output or performance to be produced): Differentiation of learning can also be done through the products produced. For students who need guidance, answering questions about the core content of the material can be assigned, for students who are quite proficient, they can create a presentation explaining simple problem solutions, and for very proficient students, they can create an innovation or examine more complex problems.

**Monitoring and evaluating stage of differentiated learning in the emancipated curriculum at SIB Thailand**

In the learning evaluation stage, data is obtained from key informants through three data collection techniques. Following this, the word cloud outlining the concentration of words in the collected data reveals that the term "learning" constitutes 6.25%; subsequently, the word "evaluation" amounts to 3.91%; the term "creative" indicates a percentage of 1.56%; the words "observasi", "portfolio," and "project" collectively make up 1.56%; while the term "critically" registers at 0.78%. This description is depicted in Figure 5 below.

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**Figure 5.** Word cloud of monitoring and evaluating stage in differentiated learning at the SIB Thailand

Based on the Figure 5 above, we can conclude that learning evaluation is a crucial process in education to assess the extent of achieving the expected learning objectives. In the context of the Emancipated Curriculum, Learning Evaluation becomes more complex as it involves skills and attitudes, in addition to knowledge. The implementation of Emancipated Curriculum learning evaluation in SIB Thailand is approached differently. The evaluation of Emancipated Curriculum learning should be conducted based on principles that encourage students to actively engage in learning, think critically, and be creative. Furthermore, Emancipated Curriculum learning evaluation should also consider the local context and enable students to develop their potential to the fullest. In the evaluation of Emancipated Curriculum learning, assessments are not limited to written tests. Evaluation is also carried out through project assignments that sharpen students' collaboration, communication, and critical thinking skills. Evaluation can also be conducted through teacher observations of students' progress and students' self-reflection on the completed learning. In the context of Emancipated Curriculum learning evaluation, teachers play a crucial role in providing various assessment tools that align with the principles of Emancipated Curriculum learning. Teachers also need to understand that Emancipated Curriculum learning evaluation is not only to determine students' learning outcomes but also to improve the learning process. The evaluation of Emancipated Curriculum learning should be approached differently from general learning evaluation. It should be conducted considering the principles of learning that encourage students to actively engage in learning, think critically, and be creative, while also taking into account the local context. Evaluation is not limited to written tests but includes project assignments, teacher observations, and students' self-reflection.

**Discussion**

Based on the research data obtained, the discussion in this research focus in three stages of managing differentiated learning in SIB Thailand. First stage is planning stage in conducting differentiated learning. The planning process of differentiated learning at the SIB Thailand involves several steps: (a) cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessments; (b) analysis of diagnostic assessment results; (c) development of teaching modules; and (d) creation of formative and summative assessments. Teachers conduct cognitive diagnostic assessments to evaluate the extent to which students have mastered material related to past and future learning. These assessments play a crucial role in preparing a learning process tailored to the characteristics of students and the conditions at school as mentioned in the previous research (Kizi et al., 2022; Csapo & Molnar, 2019; Sia et al., 2018).

The implementation of cognitive diagnostic assessments includes planning the assessment, identifying assessment materials, and preparing reflective questions. The diagnostic assessment process is prepared by referring to which material can be included as a measure of the depth of the material mastered by students. It is relevant to some research which stated that the scope of the material must be prepared when conducting the planning stage of diagnostic assessments (Treagust, 2012 and Tang & Zhan, 2021). Furthermore, it described the scope of diagnostic

assessment as follows: (a) What topics need to be understood by students at this grade; and (b) What knowledge and skills need to be mastered by students from the previous grade level. The implementation of diagnostic assessments is carried out periodically, specifically at the beginning of each new material scope. The purpose of providing these assessments is to determine the readiness of students to face the learning process, especially in the new school year. Previous studies justified the findings of this study, where diagnostic assessment is conducted periodically then it results in the students' characteristics analysis (Fan et al., 2021; der Kleij et al., 2015; Jang & Sinclair, 2021; Mazloomi & Khabiri, 2016).

Another aspect that is mandatory in preparing learning activities is teaching modules. There are some adjustments in the new format of teaching modules, including: (a) Pancasila Students' Profile which must be integrated into the learning activities; (b) varies teaching methods and assessment methods; and (c) learning goals which depend on the class characteristics and it is possible to set different learning goals at the same grade. This finding is justified by some research result and it is stated that teaching modules as the direction, but not the only aspect that can be referred. It must accommodate: (a) students' developmental stages; (b) a learning design that can create an enjoyable and meaningful environment; (e) involving parents and the community as partners; and (f) Future-oriented. From the first stage discussion, it can be inferred that the whole process of the planning stage requires preliminary analysis through diagnostic assessment. Diagnostic assessment provides cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of students' characteristics. Furthermore, diagnostic assessment results have to be integrated to decide the teaching method and assessment method. These will be beneficial for teachers and students in conducting an enjoyable learning process.

The second stage is implementing differentiated learning. SIB Thailand is the pilot of overseas Indonesian School that has been implementing the Emancipated Curriculum which also providing teaching at the right level based on the students' characteristics map-out. SIB teachers focus on delivering instruction at a level that is appropriate for each student's individual learning needs and readiness. The key idea behind TaRL is to ensure that students receive instruction and materials that match their current competency level, rather than sticking to a one-size-fits-all approach. The research findings are similar to Banerjee's (2016) which mentioned a successful learning activity as a result of addressing students' needs. This research proved that a rigorous curriculum will result to the un-effectiveness of the learning process.

SIB Thailand teachers conduct learning activities using various teaching methods. Their goals is accommodating students' needs which may be different for each developmental stage on each subject or skill. As mentioned by the teachers, they use this learning approach to avoid both underestimating and overestimating students' capabilities. By providing targeted instruction at the right level, SIB Thailand teachers can help students progress in their learning effectively. This approach is associated with a more personalized and adaptive teaching style, promoting student engagement and understanding. Moraros (2015) provided an identical approach which required teachers' understanding of students' personalities and resulted in an effective teaching process.

The third stage is the monitoring and evaluation stage in differentiated learning. The Emancipated Curriculum paradigm requires teachers to conduct three kinds of assessments: (a) diagnostic assessment; (b) formative assessment; and (c) summative assessment. SIB Thailand teachers have been developing the assessment method to encourage students' potential skills and competencies. Students' journals and portfolios can be used as formative assessments and they can measure students' progression during their daily activities. Summative assessment can be measured by students' projects that are presented through presentation, role-playing, demonstration, and other various assessment methods. As mentioned by the teachers, through non-test assessments students can be helped to have: (a) a holistic understanding where students will develop their knowledge and skills; (b) real-world experience, which is the result of non-test assessments which requires students to simulate real-world scenarios and tasks; (c) creativity and critical thinking, because it encourages students to analyze information, solve problems, and think critically about the subject matter, fostering higher-order thinking skills. These findings are

supported by some previous studies which stated that non-test assessments can be tailored to accommodate diverse learning styles (Kautz et al., 2014; Sadeghi & Rahmati, 2017; and West et al., 2016). Students who may struggle with traditional testing formats might excel when allowed to express themselves through alternative means, such as visual presentations, hands-on projects, and even online assessments. This will help students to develop their competencies and widen their insight regarding the subject and non-cognitive aspects. It is strengthened by some research that mentioned students' improvement after being given similar treatment by the teachers (McGrew et al. 2018; Chappell et al., 2015; Black et al., 2017).

Group projects and collaborative assignments promote SIB Thailand students' teamwork and communication skills. Students learn to work effectively with others, share ideas, and articulate their thoughts, preparing them for collaborative environments in the future. Related results stated in some research, it is clearly described that engaging in hands-on projects or activities often leads to better retention of information for students (Kokotsaki et al., 2016; Condllife, 2017; Chen, 2019; Anazifa et al., 2017). SIB teachers also mentioned when students actively participate in the learning process, they are more likely to remember and understand the material in the long term.

Beyond academic content, non-test assessments contribute to the development of life skills such as time management, organization, and project planning for SIB Thailand students. These skills are valuable for students as they transition to higher education and the workforce. It is also justified by some research results that highlighted students' competencies development when they periodically assessed through non-test assessments (Angela et al., 2015; Barret et al., 2015; Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). Teachers of SIB Thailand revealed that non-test assessments often provide more detailed and constructive feedback as well. This feedback helps students to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering continuous learning and growth. Greenhow and Lewin (2018), Häkkinen et al. (2016), Graesser (2017), and Brilingaitė et al. (2018) stated the similar research findings which oriented to students' ability to construct what they want to develop from their potential. In can be inferred that the variety of assessment methods can motivate students by offering diverse and interesting ways to showcase their abilities. Students may find non-test assessments more engaging, leading to increased motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

## CONCLUSION

Learning process at SIB Thailand is designed by considering the developmental stages and the current level of achievement of students, in line with their learning needs, and reflecting the diverse characteristics and development of students, making the learning meaningful and enjoyable. This supports the idea that learning should be designed and implemented by building the capacity to become lifelong learners. The learning process at SIB Thailand facilitates the development of students' competencies and character in a holistic manner. Relevant learning at SIB Thailand is aimed at being designed according to the context, environment, and culture of the students, involving parents and the community as partners. SIB Thailand places a strong emphasis on sustainable, future-oriented learning. For future research, it is recommended to explore several aspects related to the Emancipated Curriculum implementation at SIB Thailand. It is possible to conduct a longitudinal study to assess the long-term impact of the Emancipated Curriculum on students' academic achievements, skills development, and overall learning outcomes. This could involve tracking students over several years to observe how well they retain and apply the knowledge and skills acquired.

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