



Differentiated learning management at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the implementation of differentiated learning management as well as the obstacles faced and the efforts made. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan, Kauditan District, North Minahasa Regency. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods. The research sources were school principals, teachers and students as informants to find out the implementation of differentiated learning management as well as the obstacles faced and the efforts made. Data collection techniques are observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation and data verification. The results of this research indicate that the implementation of differentiated learning management has been implemented at the Kauditan 1 Public Middle School. The stages of differentiated learning management carried out include planning, organizing, implementing and evaluating. Despite this, in reality there are several obstacles faced, but a number of efforts have also been made by SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan.

Keywords: Management, differentiated learning

Introduction

Education is the most important investment for a nation's civilization. The essence of education is a way of strengthening and instilling national cultural values or in the view of Ki Hajar Dewantara according to Hadiansah (2022)^[2] as a way of humanizing humans. Ki Hajar Dewantara explained that education is a process that leads a person to acquire knowledge that is useful in life and makes that individual attain inner and outer happiness in his life. The benefit of education is to guide all the natures of the child or individual in achieving safety and happiness as both a human being and a member of society.

Based on monitoring by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020), there are four trends in the global dynamics of 21st century education, namely: (1) technological advances that are driving the Industrial Revolution 4.0, (2) shifts in demographics and socio-economic profiles, (3) increasing demand for energy and water, and (4) changes in the future world of work. To be able to adapt to the global dynamics of education, schools as educational institutions must have quality services in developing character, fulfilling society's hopes and values, as well as basic 21st century skills (Hadiansah, 2022)^[2].

School achievement in Indonesia is facing fundamental problems, namely the problem of waning character and the problem of literacy skills. Where these two problems are the starting points for 21st century skills. In this case, education must fulfill three 21st century skills, namely: basic literacy skills; (2) competence, and (3) quality of character. Apart from these problems, there are several other educational problems such as the need to improve the effectiveness of educators' teaching, inadequate infrastructure, geographical inequality in the quality of education, lack of awareness of the importance of culture, books and language. And the curriculum is seen as rigid and only focuses on content.

The problems faced make the government attempt to answer the challenges faced in advancing the quality of education in Indonesia. Based on the problems faced, various programs

and policies for the transformation of education in Indonesia have created the policy of the independent learning program. "The independent learning policy is essentially to give every educational unit the freedom to innovate. This concept must adapt to the conditions in which the teaching and learning process takes place, both in terms of culture, local wisdom, socio-economics and infrastructure. The essence of Merdeka Belajar is exploring the greatest potential of educators and students to innovate and improve the quality of learning independently. Mandiri is not only following the educational bureaucratic process, but is truly educational innovation. In turn, educators cannot possibly be replaced by technology. The reason is that technology is only a tool to help educators increase their potential." (Mendikbudristek, 2020).

The freedom to learn policy from the ministry of education, culture, research and technology regarding curriculum and learning systems, which carries the idea of freedom of thought for both teachers and students in learning activities. This idea is based on freedom of thought to create a learning atmosphere that is not burdened with achieving certain grades. In learning, teachers are given the freedom to design contextual and meaningful learning in accordance with the standards of the Pancasila student profile, namely faith, devotion to God Almighty and noble character, creativity, mutual cooperation, global diversity, critical reasoning and independence.

Freedom to learn is one of the programs initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, where the aim of this program is for teachers, students and parents to have a happy atmosphere, freedom to learn makes teachers, students and parents happy. With freedom to learn, students are taught to be able to make wise decisions and be able to act in ways that can bring happiness to themselves as individuals and even in social life. The benefits of free learning for teachers give teachers the freedom to innovate in learning, such as introducing their own better learning methods so that learning becomes fun for students. Another

benefit is that teachers are also free to develop creative learning and play an active role in creating globally competent students.

Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards states that it is necessary to prepare a diversified curriculum according to regional characteristics, educational units and students. Development of educational unit curriculum as an embodiment of school independence which provides the widest possible opportunity for educational units to develop their respective operational curricula in accordance with their needs and characteristics (Permendikbud no. 61 of 2014 concerning Educational Unit Level Curriculum). Based on these references, educational units need to develop a curriculum which is flexible according to the circumstances of students in their respective schools. As is known, there are various unique characters within one school and even within the classroom. This is seen from the readiness to learn, interests, talents and various learning styles. Therefore, students need services that are different from each other so that they understand the competencies and learning materials according to their individual characteristics so that they can develop optimally.

Carol A. Tomlinson, an educator since 1995, has written down her ideas in a book entitled *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms* regarding teaching that pays attention to the individual differences of students. Then the idea became known as differentiated instruction or translated as differentiated learning. In differentiated learning, teachers teach the material by paying attention to students' readiness, interests and learning styles. Purba, et al: 2021) teachers can also modify lesson content, learning processes, products or results of the learning being taught, and the environment in which students learn. . The differentiated learning process can be implemented in schools in order to free students in learning because students are not required to be the same in everything, but can express themselves according to their own uniqueness.

In implementing differentiated learning, which is one of the focuses of the independent curriculum, it allows teachers to reduce learning gaps through the process of identifying appropriate student learning needs according to readiness, interests and learning styles. At the beginning of the learning year or before preparing teaching modules, teachers provide diagnostic assessments to students whose aim is to identify students' competencies, strengths and weaknesses. These include analyzing students' previous learning reports, identifying competencies that will be taught, oral or written tests, observations, if necessary, educators can dig up information from students, such as looking for information related to family background, motivation, interests, facilities and infrastructure according to needs. students or schools. All information obtained from the diagnostic assessment process can be used as a reference in planning learning according to students' learning needs.

In carrying out a differentiated learning process, of course there are many things that need to be prepared by the education unit, including all stakeholders involved in it. Differentiated learning management involves managing the learning process to meet the individual needs of students, so that each student can gain relevant and meaningful learning experiences. To implement differentiated learning management, there are various methods that can be used, including: Identifying individual needs and characteristics

of students, arranging learning that suits students' needs, students are given several choices to learn according to their interests or learning styles, using technology through online learning or use adaptive learning software and teachers can use different test methods such as oral tests, written tests, projects according to students' needs. Differentiated learning is one of the strategies used to help students reach their potential and improve the quality of their learning.

The implementation of differentiated learning is simultaneously carried out by schools that have used the implementation of the independent curriculum, in North Minahasa Regency, especially at Kauditan 1 Middle School since the odd semester of the 2022-2023 academic year for class VII students. Based on this description, the researcher wants to conduct research and find out how differentiated learning is implemented at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan, because this school has implemented the independent curriculum and how the management of differentiated learning has been carried out at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan. In the process of managing differentiated learning management carried out at the SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan educational unit there are definitely challenges or obstacles faced and of course there are efforts made to overcome the obstacles faced.

Method

This research uses qualitative methods, where humans are the research tool itself. This research was carried out at the first level secondary school education unit, namely SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan, in Kawiley, Kauditan District, North Mianahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province. Primary data was obtained by conducting direct interviews and observations. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from trusted sources through several literature reviews, journals and articles both in print and via the internet, documentation and data from agencies. The data collection techniques used are interview, observation and documentation methods. The data analysis techniques used are data reduction methods, data presentation and data verification. In this research, to obtain valid data, what was tested to obtain the validity of the data was data obtained in the field. Testing the validity of data or trust in research results can be done by extending observations, increasing persistence, triangulation, and member checking.

Results and Discussion

A. Implementation of Differentiated Learning at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan

Differentiated learning is an adjustment to students' interests, learning preferences, and readiness in order to achieve increased learning outcomes. Differentiated Learning is not individualized learning. However, it tends to be learning that accommodates students' strengths and learning needs with independent learning strategies. When teachers respond to students' learning needs, this means that teachers differentiate learning by adding, expanding, adjusting time to obtain maximum learning outcomes for students. This means that teachers differentiate learning by adding, expanding, and adjusting time to obtain maximum learning outcomes (Marlina 2006: 3).

Interviews conducted with informants, principals, teachers and students at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan related to the planning aspect, namely the implementation of differentiated learning. Several points for implementing differentiated learning are as follows: (1) Communication

regarding the material that has been obtained and asking about things that students like, such as students' hobbies and interests in order to map students' needs; (2) Preparing teaching tools that are adapted to the curriculum implemented in schools; (3) Preparing teaching modules; (4) Make an assessment to determine initial abilities; (5) Utilizing the independent teaching platform; (6) Teachers carry out cognitive and non-cognitive assessments to determine students' initial abilities, both strengths and weaknesses; (7) Using reference books that are adapted to the teaching material; and (8) Adaptation of material in the independent teaching platform.

In connection with the implementation of this learning, the principal emphasized that teachers need to map the learning needs of students and also teachers must learn independently through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform which has been facilitated by the government which can be accessed at any time online. In the aspect of organizing differentiated learning, some of the answers from the interview results are as follows: (1) The need for teachers to analyze learning outcomes and learning objectives; (2) Develop teaching modules; (3) Teachers carry out assessments and evaluations; (4) Teachers need to focus on material content, meaningful learning processes and products as final assessments; (5) Teachers map students' needs in terms of learning readiness, interests and learning profiles; (6) Carrying out in-house training activities at the beginning of the new school year in preparing the school curriculum; (7) Carrying out collaborative activities with friends in one subject team; and (8) Carrying out assessments and reflections.

In organizing learning, teachers are first equipped, for example through in-house training, as stated by a teacher above. In this context, the importance of collaboration with other teachers is found. In terms of how teachers organize learning, the principal also emphasized the importance of differentiated learning stages. In the aspect of implementing differentiated learning, several points were found based on the answers of several informants as follows: (1) Teachers teach according to the flow of learning steps starting from the introductory, core and closing stages; (2) Using various interesting and meaningful teaching methods; (3) Include activity sequence syntax in teaching methods; (4) Student-centered teaching activities; (5) Holding learning reflections both for yourself and for the students themselves; and (6) The teacher provides feedback related to learning. In the supervision aspect, what the school does is provide feedback to improve weaknesses and deficiencies. Feedback is provided so that teachers can understand the extent to which the material taught can be understood by students.

From several findings obtained and observed in connection with the implementation of differentiated learning at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan, it can be analyzed as follows:

1. Implementation of differentiated learning in schools

The Kauditan 1 Public Middle School has a detailed and clear understanding of the curriculum, more specifically the application of differentiated learning. The teachers' understanding of differentiated learning is clearly oriented towards students' learning needs. Where students' learning needs have been mapped according to learning readiness, learning interests and learning profiles through initial assessments or diagnostic assessments.

Teachers are able to design learning, it is clear that every new school year training or in-house training is carried out for teachers to develop teaching tools including making assessments as indicators of achievement of learning objectives. Furthermore, they are also able to use various interesting and meaningful teaching methods so that children do not feel bored in learning. Teachers also take advantage of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform to increase their understanding regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and its implementation in schools.

2. Creating a conducive learning environment

Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan School create a conducive learning environment. In this case, teachers are able to involve students in learning and trying to achieve their learning goals. Apart from that, students realize that teachers are always there to support the learning process. According to Mulyasa, what are the characteristics of a conducive school environment? The characteristics of a conducive environment are not only seen from the building, yard, school equipment but also the need to maintain good relationships with others and obey the school rules that have been set. A conducive environment can, among other things, be developed through various services and activities as follows: 1) Providing options for students who are slow or fast in carrying out learning tasks. Individual choices and services for students, especially for those who are slow learners, will arouse the appetite and enthusiasm for learning, thus making them feel at home studying at school. 2) Providing remedial learning for students who are underachieving or low achieving. In a classical learning system, some students will find it difficult to participate in learning optimally, and lead to extra roles for teachers to provide remedial learning. 3) Develop a class organization that is effective, attractive, comfortable and safe for the optimal development of the potential of all students. This includes providing interesting and challenging learning materials for students, as well as appropriate, effective and efficient classroom management. 4) Creating mutually respectful cooperation both between students and between students and teachers and other learning managers. This implies that every student has the widest possible opportunity to express his views without any fear of being sanctioned or embarrassed. 5) Involve students in the learning and learning planning process. In this case, teachers must be able to position themselves as guides and human resources. Once in a while, try to involve students in the learning planning process, so that they feel responsible for the learning being carried out. 6) Develop the learning process as a shared responsibility between students and teachers, so that teachers act more as facilitators and as learning resources. 7) Develop a learning and learning evaluation system that emphasizes self-evaluation. In this case, the teacher as a facilitator must be able to help students to assess how they are making progress in the learning process they are going through (Mulyasa, 2006: 21-22).

3. Carry out ongoing assessments

Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan have carried out ongoing assessments. At the end of the flow of assessment results during the implementation of differentiated learning in content, process, product and final evaluation, continuous feedback is obtained. In every differentiated learning

process, improvements in process and content choices, as well as continuous evaluation of learning objectives, are carried out so that this can provide information for understanding students to what extent they have developed. Tomlinson & Moon (2013) say that assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information in the classroom with the aim of helping teachers make decisions. Examples of three types of learning assessment are: diagnostic assessment, formative assessment (content and process differentiation stages), and summative assessment.

B. Barriers to Differentiated Learning Management at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan

The results of interviews conducted by researchers with key informants regarding the obstacles in implementing differentiated learning management at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan, obtained answers which were essentially related to the following: (1) Adjusting students' learning needs; (2) Limited resources; (3) Classroom management skills; and (4) Testing and evaluation.

For teachers who are optimistic, the challenges in implementing differentiated learning can actually have a positive impact on students because students are mapped according to their abilities. This positive impact is very beneficial for students' self-development according to their learning readiness, interests, talents and learning profile. But on the other hand, it is a challenge for teachers to meet each student's needs. In terms of the positive side, this is what makes teachers interested in implementing differentiated learning. However, the reality on the ground is that there are still challenges that still occur at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan which can be summarized in several points below:

1. The existence of a curriculum that is often experienced binds teachers within the limits of the material or in choosing certain teaching methods. Learning that is differentiated according to students' abilities actually makes the teacher's work extra hard and requires flexibility in terms of facilitating the learning needs of each student. This is also in accordance with the opinion of Purwowododo (2023: 5) who says that differentiated learning is a learning activity that creates diversity in the class based on students' varied interests and talents and learning styles. Differentiated learning facilitates all the differences that students have openly with the needs that students will achieve (Agus Puwowododo 2023: 5).
2. There are still difficulties for teachers in terms of adapting to students' learning needs, especially in identifying and understanding students' learning needs, because in reality every class at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan has a diversity of backgrounds, both in terms of economics, culture and social and even related to their interests. As a result, teachers have to adapt quickly to be able to group according to their preferred interests. Moreover, each student has a different learning style, level of understanding and interests. In this case, classroom management skills are needed in managing to lead a class with a variety of learning needs. Of course, this requires effective classroom management skills. In this case, teachers must be able to find a balance between providing individual attention to students and maintaining general order in the classroom. In fact, differentiated classes are: 1)

Assessing student readiness through various means; 2) Reading and interpreting students' interests and learning preferences; 3) Create various ways for students to collect information and ideas; 4) Develop various ways for students to explore and "own" ideas; 5) Presenting varied means where students can express and expand understanding (Marlina 2020: 14).

3. There are limited resources in the classroom, including limited availability of time, space and even teaching materials. And from the experience of teachers, there are difficulties in managing the diverse learning of each student in one class. In terms of providing testing and evaluation, there are still difficulties in assessing the progress of students who are not the same in the context of understanding one lesson. In this case, it is a challenge for teachers to be able to provide fair, objective and accountable assessments.

C. Differentiated Learning Management Efforts at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan

To overcome these obstacles related to differentiated learning, it is necessary for every school to always carry out evaluations. The aim is to minimize any obstacles that arise by seeking several solutions so that this learning can be carried out according to its objectives. Therefore, it is important for teachers to have a deep understanding of students' learning needs and develop effective strategies in implementing this learning.

The efforts made in implementing differentiated learning management at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan are as follows:

1. Facilitate teachers through in-house training activities, so that they can clearly understand the curriculum being implemented, especially in implementing differentiated learning. In this way, teachers can be equipped to be able to design, implement and evaluate different learning.
2. The school together with teachers collaborate with other teachers, especially in sharing experiences in carrying out differentiated learning based on students' abilities in learning in accordance with student profiles with different levels of understanding from each other. In this way, students' needs can be maximized and they can receive assistance in learning. Even Carol Ann Tomlinson, (in Marlina 2022: 21) suggests that teachers determine the learning outcomes they expect from students themselves by developing learning units designed to meet student needs. The first step in designing a learning unit is a commitment to teach students according to student needs and characteristics.
3. Teachers support and learn to understand each student according to their needs based on different characteristics. And in implementing differentiated learning, teachers have taken action by doing several things such as: doing the following things: designing different learning based on survey results and also offering different choices to students and adapting to learning strategies and methods. In this context, teachers use meaningful learning that involves physical, emotional and appropriate stimuli to stimulate students' thinking processes.
4. The context of teacher support for improving differentiated learning is also in accordance with the results of research conclusions from Desy Wahyuningsar (2022: 530-535) who believes that

teachers can also change lesson content, learning processes, learning products or outcomes taught, and the learning environment in which students Study. Teachers can serve students who are taught according to their individual circumstances by carrying out this learning process. Schools can use differentiated learning processes to free students from having to be the same in everything, allowing them to express themselves according to their own uniqueness. The implementation of differentiated learning will be a flexible and not rigid curriculum that only believes in one way to achieve educational goals in schools.

5. The school maps learning needs based on three aspects, namely readiness, interest and way of learning. In this case, mapping learning needs is our main key to determining next steps. And in mapping students' learning needs, the school also asks for accurate information from students, parents/guardians or from those close to the students. This is also in accordance with the opinion of Purwowidodo (2023: 9) who believes that teachers also apply four (4) elements, namely content, process, product and learning environment. Teachers should accommodate and differentiate. Differentiated learning has the view that each student should be given the opportunity to learn according to himself. In learning, teachers should differentiate in the form of modifications to the five elements of learning activities, namely content, process, product, environment and evaluation. Teacher creativity is very necessary to be able to accommodate this in order to provide meaningful learning for each student to achieve the competencies they want to target.
6. Teachers together with the school always carry out evaluations and reflections every semester in the implementation of differentiated learning. In this case, the SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan school feels it is important to carry out self-reflection so that it can help teachers in planning effective learning to implement differentiated learning effectively while improving and finding solutions to every obstacle. In this case, the teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan always have a positive attitude because the teacher's main goal is to optimize the potential of students. In reflection activities, students are also encouraged to be asked questions to provide an assessment of the teacher so that the teacher can understand deficiencies in the learning being taught and as material for improvement for future learning.

Conclusion

1. SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan has a detailed and clear understanding of the curriculum, more specifically the application of differentiated learning. The teachers' understanding of differentiated learning is clearly oriented towards students' learning needs. Teachers are able to design learning, are able to use various interesting and meaningful teaching methods, are able to utilize the use of independent teaching platforms, and are able to create a comfortable, conducive atmosphere for students to learn. Teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Kauditan have carried out ongoing assessments.
2. Learning that is differentiated according to students' abilities actually makes teachers work extra hard in terms of facilitating learning according to each student's needs. Furthermore, there are still difficulties for

teachers in terms of adjusting students' learning needs. On the other hand, there are still limited resources in the classroom, including the availability of time, space and even teaching materials. In terms of providing testing and evaluation, there are still difficulties in providing objective assessments for each different student.

3. The first effort is to facilitate teachers through in-house training activities so that they can clearly understand the application of the curriculum, especially in the application of differentiated learning. Furthermore, the school and teachers collaborate with other teachers, especially in sharing experiences in carrying out differentiated learning. Further efforts made include designing different learning based on survey results and also offering different choices to students and adapting them to learning strategies and methods. In this context, teachers. The last thing the school does is map students' needs according to aspects, namely readiness, interests and ways of learning.

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