



Workshop on Implementing the Independent Curriculum: Differentiated Learning for Junior High School Teachers in West Seram Regency

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Abstract: This community service activity aims to provide a workshop for 15 teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol to improve their skills in implementing differentiated learning. This workshop is expected to help teachers implement the Independent Curriculum and Differentiated Learning well and acquire new knowledge and skills in dealing with the diversity of students in the classroom more effectively and equitably, so that this can also be reflected in learning tools/modules. In addition, teachers are expected to be able to use interactive learning media that can stimulate student activity so that through this training teachers can not only improve their knowledge and skills related to differentiated learning, but also be able to choose learning methods/models/media that are appropriate to the characteristics of students and materials. The community service team organizes activities based on 4 stages: preparation and provision, implementation, and program sustainability. This community service received a positive response with an average percentage value of teacher responses to the Workshop on Implementing the Independent Curriculum: Differentiated Learning for Teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol, namely 86.4%, so it can be said that the community service activities at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol were successful and well received by the principal, teachers, and students.

Keywords: Differentiated Learning, Learning Models, Learning Media.

Introduction

The Independent Curriculum (Curriculum Merdeka) is a curriculum that involves intracurricular learning with diverse content so that students can be more optimal and have sufficient time to understand concepts and develop competencies (Aryzona et al., 2023). At the secondary education level, such as junior high school, teachers' understanding of student characteristics and needs is crucial for achieving effective and equitable learning (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022). Students' characters are very diverse (Aprima & Sari, 2022), and their learning styles also differ. As educators, teachers must be able to understand their students' characters so that learning objectives can be

achieved effectively for all students (Sari et al., 2023). Teachers should be able to design strategies, methods, and select media that are appropriate to each student's character (Rachmadhani et al., 2023). One part of the Independent Curriculum is Differentiated Learning. This learning strategy aims to meet the learning needs of students in the classroom because they have different learning styles (Maulidia & Prafitasari, 2023).

Differentiated learning is a learning strategy that accommodates the diversity of students based on their learning readiness, interests, and learning styles to achieve maximum learning outcomes (Septyana et al., 2023; Tomlinson, 2001). Some also argue that differentiated learning is an important approach to improving student motivation and learning outcomes

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(Marlina, 2020). Differentiated learning has three aspects: the content aspect to be worked on, the process aspect or meaningful activities that students carry out during class, and the assessment aspect in the form of creating a final product to measure goal achievement. Strategies in differentiated learning are inseparable from the teacher's perception of students' learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic). This perception is related to how a teacher selects, organizes, and interprets stimuli into meaningful images (Marlina et al., 2022). Thus, it can be said that differentiated learning does not mean teachers must meet the needs of all individuals at all times. Teachers are expected to use various learning approaches so that most students find a learning method that suits their needs. Differentiated learning is learning that accommodates students' needs. Teachers facilitate students according to their needs, because each student has a unique character and cannot be treated the same.

On the other hand, teachers still face difficulties implementing differentiated learning, as evidenced by previous research. Teachers' understanding of differentiated learning is still lacking (Usman et al., 2022). In interviews, teachers revealed that they had only recently heard of the term. Barriers to differentiated learning are caused by technological issues, a lack of understanding of independent learning, a lack of learning resources, and teachers' difficulties in implementing learning (Fauzia & Ramadan, 2023). Furthermore, research by Fitriah & Widiyono (2023) shows that teachers struggle to group students based on character, learning style, and ability, as well as limited time and necessary facilities and infrastructure. One common misconception is that teachers perceive the implementation of this learning as complex, difficult, and complicating learning (Suwanjal & Apriani, 2023). Teachers still believe that each student should receive different learning experiences. The implementation of differentiated learning which has just been implemented in schools also causes misperceptions (Mulyanto, et al., 2023).

However, based on a preliminary study conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol through observations and interviews with the principal and teachers regarding classroom learning, it was found that this school has begun implementing the Merdeka curriculum. While the Merdeka curriculum has been implemented, it has not yet implemented differentiated learning. The principal revealed that not all teachers have received training on implementing the Merdeka curriculum in schools, particularly on in-depth understanding of the main components of differentiated learning in the aspects of content, process, product, and learning environment. Consequently, teachers' understanding of the Merdeka curriculum implementation in differentiated learning is still lacking and results in less than optimal

implementation of the learning, where students are still treated uniformly without considering their individual needs. Furthermore, the school is located very far away and the terrain is quite difficult to reach. Considering these problems, one solution is to hold a Workshop on Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum: Differentiated Learning for Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol.

Method

To address the issues raised in the Introduction, it is necessary to conduct a Community Service Program (PPM) by lecturers in the Physics Education Study Program. The stages to be implemented are as follows:

Preparation and Provisioning

At this stage, the community service team held a discussion about the material that would be trained for educators and the mechanism for implementing the PkM activities, as well as the distribution of material that would be presented by the team. The materials prepared by the PkM team were as follows: (1) Differentiated Learning in general, (2) Models/methods that can activate students, (3) interactive learning media related to technology (applications) and (4) making learning devices/modules. The selection of these materials was based on the needs of educators at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol.

Implementation

Community service activities are implemented based on the results of a situation analysis, problems identified by partners, and solutions agreed upon by the Community Service implementation team and partners. The stages of this service implementation can be detailed as follows:

1. Socialization
 - ✓ Starting with conveying the objectives of PkM and the benefits of the activities to teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol.
 - ✓ Providing materials related to differentiated learning, models/methods that can be used to activate students, and interactive learning media related to technology (applications).
2. Training
 - ✓ Providing opportunities for teachers to create learning devices/modules based on the Independent Curriculum linked to differentiated learning.
 - ✓ Assist teachers in creating learning materials/modules. The team will split into groups to observe/assist in creating the materials.

3. Application of technology

The team is trying to form teachers who are proficient/capable in the use of technology, so that in addition to providing material, the team is trying in small groups to provide further stimulation related to ICT-based learning media such as PHET, Wordwall, and so on.

4. Evaluation

Provide teacher response instruments related to the workshop/training provided so that the team can find out teacher responses regarding the workshop and can use them as evaluation material for the next PkM.



Figure 1. Stages of Community Service Activities

Program Sustainability

Evaluation of the implementation of the Community Service Program (PKM) conducted during the implementation phase serves as the basis for preparing for the program's sustainability. The sustainability of the PkM program includes:

- Creating plans for follow-up or follow-up activities that can deepen teachers' understanding/skills about differentiated learning.
- Provide additional resources or support for schools, especially teachers, to further hone their skills/knowledge in creating learning devices/modules.
- Considering collaboration between FKIP and schools to hold similar activities periodically.

Results and Discussion

The implementation of PPM activities in August 2025 began with an observation/interview of one of the

teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol then the preparation of proposals and instruments, then the permit and coordination process was carried out assisted by one of the science teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol. At the observation/interview stage, the team formulated the problems faced by the partner (SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol) which ultimately focused on differentiated learning activities. The next process was making a proposal and then the activity permit was entered at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol with the aim of the Principal then the activity was scheduled by the Principal on Monday and Tuesday, August 25 and 26, 2025 at 09.00 WIT until completion. Next, the preparation of instruments and preparation of materials and the division of tasks for each member of the Team.

The instrument prepared was a teacher response questionnaire on PPM. The materials provided included; (1) Differentiated Learning in general, (2) Models/methods that can activate students, (3) interactive learning media related to technology (applications) and (4) making learning tools/modules. These four materials were presented by lecturers from the Physics Education Study Program, Pattimura University, Ambon. This Community Service activity was opened by the Principal of SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol. The activity was then taken over by a moderator from the teaching staff of the Physics Education Study Program, Pattimura University. Activity documentation is presented in Figure 2 and Figure 3.



Figure 2. PPM Team along with the School Principal



Figure 3. (a) Provision of materials, and (b) Provision of donations to students.

The principal and teachers strongly supported this community service activity, as evidenced by the

principal's welcoming speech and the teachers' appreciation for participating in the activity, as well as the results of a questionnaire surveying teachers' responses to the community service. The main points covered were:

The first material is differentiated learning in general (First Meeting).

1. The first speaker provided information and delivered material on the essence of the independent learning curriculum, including its definition, benefits, objectives, characteristics, types, and examples of differentiated learning and assessment. Differentiated learning can be implemented based on the varying learning styles, abilities, character, or readiness of students.
2. The presentation of material on assessment in differentiated learning, namely diagnostic tests, begins with an explanation of the definition, benefits, types, objectives, examples, guidelines, and assessment guidelines. Understanding students' initial conditions through assessment enhances the learning process.

The second material is Models/Methods that can activate students (First Meeting).

The first speaker explained the models, strategies, and methods that can be used to engage students if teachers use a differentiated learning approach. The first speaker also explained how to apply these strategies to lesson plans, so it is hoped that teachers will be able to implement them in the second session.

After the first and second material was presented to speaker 1, a question and answer session (discussion) was held for approximately 30 minutes.

The third material is interactive learning media related to technology (applications) (second meeting).

The second speaker presented material on interactive learning media that can support the learning process, including; (1) Phet, (2) Wordwall, and (3) Seesaw. After presenting the material, the teachers were asked to try using the application.

The fourth material is the creation of learning devices/modules (second meeting).

The second speaker directed the teachers to create learning devices/modules based on the speaker's instructions.

Next, a questionnaire was distributed to teachers responding to the Community Service Program (PPM) activities. The questionnaire response form can be accessed at <https://bitly.cx/XlZ31>. The results of the questionnaire response are presented in Figure 4.

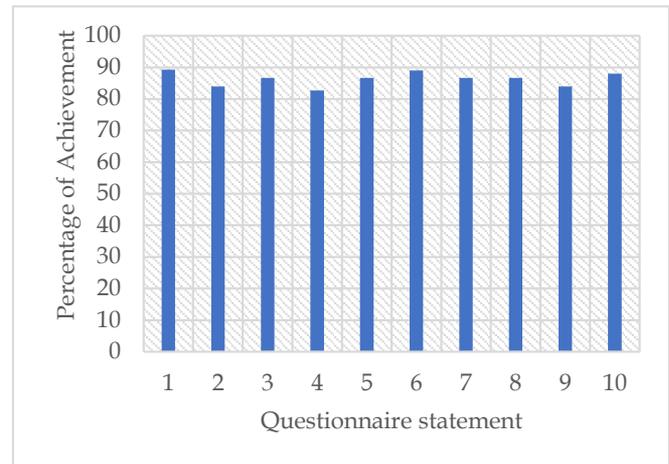


Figure 4. Results of the Teacher Response Questionnaire on PPM.

Based on the questionnaire results contained in Figure 4, it was found that the community service program at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol had a positive impact. In the first statement the percentage was 89.3%, the second statement the percentage was 84%, the third statement the percentage was 86.7%, the fourth statement was 82.7%, the fifth statement was 86.7%, the sixth statement was 89%, the seventh statement was 86.7%, the eighth statement was 86.7%, the ninth statement was 84%, and the tenth statement was 88%, with an average percentage of teacher responses to the differentiated learning workshop of 86.4% because the teachers were able to understand differentiated learning where there are four aspects in differentiated learning, namely content, process, product, and learning environment (Purba, 2021).

Content differentiation relates to the curriculum and learning materials. In this aspect, teachers modify the curriculum and learning materials based on students' learning styles (Marlina, 2019). Differentiated learning involves three ways to create differentiated content: adapting the material to be taught by the teacher or the material to be studied by students based on their learning readiness, their interests, and their learning profiles (Irdhina, 2021). Teachers can differentiate content using several strategies, including: 1) using diverse materials; 2) using learning contracts; 3) providing workshops (mini-workshops); 4) using various learning models; and 5) providing support in the form of facilities, policies, or programs (Irdhina, 2021).

This learning is inseparable from a teacher's perception of students' sensory learning styles. This is supported by the opinion of Breaux & Magee (2010); and Fox & Hoffman (2011) that differentiated learning is a way for teachers to meet the diverse needs of students. Differentiated learning is a learning process where students can learn material according to their abilities,

interests, and learning needs, so that students do not get frustrated and feel like they have failed in their learning activities.

Teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol have also understood and implemented the use of interactive learning media (Phet, Word Wall, and Seesaw) this can be seen in statement number 9 regarding interactive learning media with a percentage of 84% where interactive learning media can help teachers in improving conceptual understanding because it can facilitate active involvement of students through simulations, animations, and educational games, thus creating an interesting learning experience and providing direct feedback that deepens understanding.

This activity ran smoothly according to the schedule, starting from the opening ceremony which was opened directly by the Principal of SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol followed by Ice Breaking (Cooling down) by the community service team present at that time to maximize the focus of the teachers. Next, the core activity of the Workshop which involved highly competent and reliable resource persons in improving competency in the field of teaching who are Lecturers and Assessors of BAN PDM.

Conclusion

Community service activities can make teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol know and understand differentiated learning in general, Models/methods that can activate students, interactive and technology-related learning media (Phet, wordwall, and seesaw), and are able to apply what has been learned in making learning tools/modules. This service received a positive response with an average percentage value of teacher responses to the Workshop on Implementing the Independent Curriculum: Differentiated Learning for Teachers of SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol of 86.4%, so it can be said that the Community service activities at SMP Negeri 2 Inamosol were successful and well received by the principal, teachers, and students.

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