

**STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM IN REALIZING
INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE LEARNING AT SMA NEGERI 8 MEDAN**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find and analyze methods to improve teachers' professionalism to create innovative and effective learning at SMA Negeri 8 Medan. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach, which involves collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation from teachers and students. The results show that teachers at SMA Negeri 8 Medan have done many things to become more professional, such as attending training and workshops, and using technology in learning. To increase students' participation and encouragement, teachers use diverse and interactive learning approaches. Teachers' professional development is also assisted by school facilities, policies and training. However, there are some problems found in this study, such as technology limitations, time, and adaptation to changes in learning methods. Overall, the methodology used has improved the quality of learning, as shown by increased student enthusiasm and understanding. This research recommends collaboration between teachers and school authorities, improved supporting facilities, and continuous training programs to create a more creative and successful learning environment.

Keywords: Teacher-Professionalism; Professionalism-Improvement-Strategies; Innovative-Learning; Effective-Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is one of the main factors that determine the quality of learning in schools. Professional teachers not only master the subject matter, but are also able to develop innovative and effective learning methods to increase students' understanding and motivation to learn. In the era of globalization and the rapid development of information technology, the demand for teachers' ability to continue to develop their competence is getting higher. Therefore, improving teacher professionalism is very important so that the learning process can run well and is relevant to the needs of the times.

SMA Negeri 8 Medan is one of the secondary education institutions that has a strategic role in producing the next generation of the nation. As an educational institution that continuously strives to improve the quality of teaching and learning services, SMA Negeri 8 Medan is always committed to developing the professionalism of its teaching staff. Various competency improvement programs, such as training and workshops, have been conducted as a form of seriousness in strengthening the role of teachers as educators. However, along with the growing dynamics of the education world, a more targeted, innovative and sustainable strategy is needed to ensure that teachers are not only facilitators of learning, but also able to act as innovators who inspire and motivate students in achieving academic achievements and building superior character.

Based on this, the question that arises is how strategies can be applied to further improve teacher professionalism at SMA Negeri 8 Medan, so that it can create learning that is more effective, interesting, and in accordance with the needs of the times. This research aims to explore and formulate strategic steps that can support the development of teacher professionalism, in order to achieve optimal and sustainable learning goals.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The purpose of this method is to describe in depth how strategies to improve teacher professionalism are implemented in realizing innovative and effective learning. This research does not use statistical calculations, but focuses on data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation. With data sources of mathematics subject teachers, students of class X at SMA Negeri 8 Medan, as well as documents relevant to the learning process such as lesson plans and teacher notes.

1. Data Collection Techniques

The data in this study were collected in three ways, as follows.

a. Interview

Conducted with teachers and students to find out their views on teachers' strategies in improving professionalism and how these strategies affect learning.

b. Observation

Conducted in the classroom during the teaching and learning process. The researcher observed the way the teacher taught, the interaction with students, as well as the students' activeness during learning.

c. Documentation

Includes collecting documents such as lesson plans, attendance lists, learning implementation notes, and photos of activities that support observation and interview data.

2. Research Instruments

Researchers used several instruments to collect data, which are as follows.

a. Interview guides for teachers and students.

b. Observation sheet to record teacher activities, student participation, and classroom interaction.

c. Documentation checklist to ensure supporting data is available and in accordance with the research needs.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques with the following steps.

a. Data Reduction

Filtering and selecting data that is relevant to the focus of the research, namely strategies for improving teacher professionalism.

b. Data Presentation

Arranging the data that has been selected in the form of descriptive descriptions so that it is easy to understand and analyze.

c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

Concluding the research results based on patterns that emerge from the data. To ensure the accuracy of the data, triangulation was carried out, namely comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Efforts Made by Teachers to Enhance Professionalism in the Teaching and Learning Process

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at SMA Negeri 8 Medan, it was found that teachers particularly mathematics teachers have undertaken various efforts to improve their professionalism in the teaching and learning process. These efforts include participating in training and workshops, developing innovative lesson plans (RPP), applying a variety of teaching methods, managing classrooms effectively, integrating technology into the learning process, and conducting evaluations and reflections, as revealed in interviews with one of the teachers at the research site.

How Teachers Integrate Technology into the Teaching and Learning Process

Teachers utilize digital media in delivering learning materials. To present content visually, teachers use tools such as laptops and projectors. The use of digital media helps clarify abstract concepts, making them more comprehensible and engaging for students. They also make use of digital communication platforms. Outside the classroom, teachers interact with students through group chats and online learning applications. This facilitates the quick and effective dissemination of instructions, assignments, and feedback. However, teachers face several challenges in implementing technology, such as preparation time and limited facilities. Despite these challenges, teachers consistently strive to improve their technological competencies in teaching, which reflects their strong commitment to professionalism and enhancing the quality of education at SMA Negeri 8 Medan.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing Innovative and Effective Learning

One significant challenge is the variation in students' prior knowledge. Not all students possess the same abilities and memory retention. These differences affect the effectiveness of teaching because some students still require additional support due to gaps in knowledge from previous educational levels. For example, some students struggle with basic multiplication, which hinders their understanding of more advanced concepts. Teachers must address these foundational gaps to facilitate more effective learning. Another challenge is managing heterogeneous classrooms. Teachers must deal with students from diverse backgrounds, interests, and abilities. This diversity requires teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to ensure that all students are effectively reached and engaged.

School Support (Facilities, Policies, and Training) in Fostering Innovative Learning

It was found that the school provides various forms of support to encourage teachers in developing innovative learning practices. This support includes policy provisions that are conducive to innovation and opportunities for teacher training. However, there are limitations—some students do not receive textbooks from the school, which hampers their ability to follow along with lessons when the material is presented via textbooks. This indicates that not all school-provided facilities fully support the desired learning outcomes. Nonetheless, the school offers strong moral support by creating a conducive working environment and encouraging collaboration among teachers through discussion forums and working groups. This motivates teachers to share experiences and solutions in addressing the challenges of implementing innovative learning.

Discussion

Based on the findings obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation at SMA Negeri 8 Medan, several strategies implemented by teachers to enhance their professionalism in order to create innovative and effective learning can be discussed.

Teachers at SMA Negeri 8 Medan frequently participate in training sessions, seminars, and workshops to improve their pedagogical and professional competencies. These activities serve as key strategies for updating teaching knowledge and skills, enabling teachers to apply more creative instructional methods aligned with technological advancements and students' needs. This aligns with

the finding that continuous professional development is essential for improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers utilize technology as a learning medium to make classes more engaging and interactive. Educational applications, interactive videos, and other digital media help teachers deliver lessons in more varied and accessible ways. With the use of such technology, learning becomes more effective as students are motivated to participate actively, thereby increasing their enthusiasm for learning.

By applying various strategies and methods tailored to students' needs, teachers engage in thorough lesson planning. They strive to create a friendly and communicative classroom atmosphere where two-way interactions between teachers and students occur effectively. This was evidenced by observations showing that teachers manage the classroom well, provide systematic explanations of the material, and pose questions that encourage active classroom discussions. Furthermore, the improvement of teacher professionalism is supported by the school through facilities, policies, and regular training. The school provides adequate infrastructure and conducts regular instructional supervision. This support system fosters motivation and encourages teachers to continually enhance their capabilities.

However, there are some challenges faced by teachers in implementing these strategies, including time constraints for attending training and technical difficulties in using technology. Moreover, since students have varying levels of readiness to engage in technology-based learning, teachers need to adapt their instructional approaches to remain inclusive and effective. Overall, learning at SMA Negeri 8 Medan has proven to be both innovative and effective by implementing a professional development approach that includes technology integration, thorough lesson planning, skill enhancement through training, and institutional support. These findings reinforce the theory that ongoing teacher professionalism significantly contributes to the quality of education and student learning outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research on Strategies for Improving Teacher Professionalism in Realizing Innovative and Effective Learning at SMA Negeri 8 Medan, it can be concluded that teachers can realize innovative and effective learning. Professional teachers are able to plan, implement, and evaluate learning with approaches that are in accordance with the needs of students and the times. At SMA Negeri 8 Medan, the improvement of teacher professionalism can be seen through various programs such as continuous training, collaboration between teachers, and the use of technology in learning. Teachers are able to improve their competence in Pedagogical, Professional, Social, and Personality. These strategies have a positive impact on improving the quality of the process and student learning outcomes. The authors suggest that teachers should always innovate in teaching methods and strategies, by adjusting the learning approach to the characteristics and needs of students. Establish collaboration between teachers, both in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning, in order to create a reflective and practice-based learning culture.

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