The Role of Teacher Professionalism in Learning Differentiation of Independent Learning for Students

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Abstract
Professional teachers are teachers who can carry out learning activities well. One of them is implementing independent differentiation of learning in the classroom. For this reason, research was conducted to conceptualize the paradigm of learning differentiation in the context of realizing students’ independent learning. This study uses qualitative field research, examining data sources in books and journal articles discussing learning differentiation, teacher professionalism, and independent learning. The data collection technique used is documentation in the form of data sources from various reference sources, both journal articles, research results, and reference books. The analysis technique is carried out by reading, identifying, and classifying the data, which is then analyzed and criticized based on theoretical concepts. This is where the findings in this study can be identified as follows: (1) the teacher must have a paradigm view that independent learning differentiation already exists in the classroom. The classroom is positioned as a space for the diversity and diversity of students. This difference is a privilege that must be explored in independent learning activities; (2) professional teachers can develop differentiation designs for students’ independent learning. Learning differentiation can be contextualized in the independent learning paradigm; and (3) teachers can implement independent differentiation of learning in the classroom through a series of activities: constructivism, inquiry, asking, study groups, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment.

Keywords
Teacher Professionalism; Differentiation Learning; Independent Learning; and Students

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is the main foundation of education. With professional teachers, education can be adequately implemented, and progress in education can be realized. With professionalism in organizing educational activities, teachers will play a fundamental role in improving the quality of education. The quality of education will lead to equality, progress, and prosperity in education (Latif, 2020). This is where the position of teacher professionalism plays an essential role in advancing education. In this context, professional teachers determine the direction of educational progress (Mulyasa, 2019). With professional teachers, the teacher’s task in educating life can be realized. Professional teachers assess the success of education.

It is not surprising that in Article 39, paragraph 2 of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is stated that educators are professionals or professional teachers. These teachers have education expertise and can carry out tasks related to planning and carrying out the learning process, mentoring, and training. All tasks required of teachers as educators must be carried out professionally. Professional teachers are experts and qualified in education (Iskandar, 2014). Teachers with extensive knowledge, especially in education, have qualified education and teaching skills and have the character of noble educators (Oktavia, 2019). With this modality, teachers can carry out their responsibilities and duties and work professionally in educating their students.

Of course, education will be adequately implemented if professional teachers carry it out. This happens because a professional teacher is a teacher who has depth and love for his work as an educator, has an excellent professional attitude and character, can internalize good character in students, and always carries out his job as an educator well (Mulyasa, 2019). Professional teachers are educators with expert skills in education (Mansir & Purnomo, 2020); (Sunhaji, 2015). Professional teachers will always be able to properly implement educational material, experience, knowledge, and expertise in the educational space. Able to be a good teacher in teaching, working, and behaving in everyday life. With professional teachers, the process of changing students’ good behaviour can be realized (Purnomo & Ningsih, 2020).

From this, it can be understood that one of the factors that support efforts to form quality students in the learning process in schools is the existence of professional teachers. Professional teachers can master knowledge according to their field, have skills in implementing science, and have good character that can be accepted anywhere and can improve the quality of students (Hanafi et al., 2018). Therefore, the professionalism of teachers as educators is the key to educational progress. Teacher professionalism determines the quality and direction of education. From this, it can be identified that teacher professionalism is everything related to nature and character, which refers to teacher expertise and employment in educational activities. A professional teacher is an educator who is qualified to pursue a field that is a source of income by using expertise, skills, or proficiency that meets specific quality standards or norms and requires professional education as a person's legitimacy is recognized. This is an essential position for professional teachers in education (Nurdin, 2012). It is not surprising that professional teachers are required to be able to implement and develop differentiation-based learning to create independent learning for students. In differentiated learning, the teacher provides material to students by considering their readiness, interest, and learning styles. Teachers can also change learning materials, learning processes, learning outcomes, and learning environments according to where students learn (Wahyuningsari et al., 2021). Different learning strategies can provide activities that suit student needs to meet student learning needs. With this differentiation learning, learning in class will take place more effectively (Pitaloka & Arsanti, 2022). This demand then becomes the background of this research. Research that focuses on conceptualizing and reflecting on concepts about learning differentiation in realizing independent learning in students.
2. METHODS

The type of research used is qualitative-descriptive-textual research, which uses a qualitative paradigm in studying, analyzing, and describing phenomena in the text as a source of data (Muhajir, 2019). The text studied is a text that discusses discourse related to three essential things: teacher professionalism, learning differentiation, and independent learning. These three discourses are contained in data sources in the form of books or reference sources and journal publication articles. The data sources that have been collected and classified are then collected (Mukhtar, 2018). Here, the data collection technique used in this research is documentation with text study, which is carried out with the stages of carefully reading the discourses that will be examined in the text. The data that has been obtained is then recorded and classified. Based on data characteristics and theoretical concepts to be used (Mahsun, 2020). In this case, the researcher collects data through reading and note-taking techniques. Researchers use the reading technique to absorb and interpret data written in various journals and books, referencing teacher professionalism in independent learning differentiation. Then, researchers record findings related to teacher professionalism in independent learning differentiation.

The data that has been identified is then carried out for data analysis. Data analysis techniques are carried out by reviewing data based on the scientific point of view used, analyzing and critiquing the data that has been studied comprehensively, and presenting the results in its findings (Muhajir, 2019). In this study, researchers examined various sources used as references to teacher professionalism in independent learning differentiation. Researchers analyzed the data and presented findings on teacher professionalism in independent learning differentiation in narrative form. With this series of scientific steps, the findings and discussion of teacher professionalism in independent learning differentiation can be presented in the results of this study.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

By focusing on the study of the teacher professionalism aspect in independent learning differentiation, the presentation of results and discussion formulate a discussion on the role of teacher professionalism in independent learning differentiation. Moreover, professional teachers can implement and develop differentiation learning in creating independent learning in students. To focus on discussing these three things, the discussion in this study will examine, analyze, and present the results as follows.

**Learning Differentiation in the Classroom**

The classroom is a space for the diversity and diversity of students. Students who study in the classroom are individuals who are sure to be different in psychological, physiological, social, and belief, cultural aspects, especially when viewed in the Indonesian context. Indonesia is a diverse nation in all its aspects and features. Diversity, of course, enters and is also reflected in the classrooms at school. Students in the classroom within the school are different and diverse, and this difference and diversity must be respected and appreciated by teachers and between students. Teachers who are usually presented in learning activities must practice respect and appreciation. One learning activity that appreciates the diversity and differences of students is differentiation learning (Tomlinson, 2017). This is where differentiation learning becomes an important alternative to practice in the classroom. Learning that is carried out is oriented towards building respect and appreciation for the differences of students in the classroom. For this reason, one of the important tasks of the teacher as a professional educator is to be able to present differentiation learning activities in the classroom (Dapa, 2022).

Of course, differentiation learning is nothing new in the world of education. Differentiation learning is widely known and is the suitable learning model for classrooms where diversity in the classroom is unavoidable in the context of our nation (Rusman, 2020). This happens because differentiation learning focuses on students (student center), especially in attention, concern, and
Differentiation learning conditions the teacher to focus on the strengths and needs of students in their differences and diversity. Differentiation learning prioritizes meeting the basic needs that are most needed by students in learning (Montessori, 2021). Differentiation learning is designed to accommodate the learning needs of different students. The teacher in teaching is done by conditioning students to devote attention and ability to provide a fun learning action (Gregory & Charolyn, 2017). The teacher builds learning activities from multiple perspectives that enable students to understand and understand well according to their interests, features, and learning experiences in real life.

Through differentiation learning, teachers must be professional in teaching with an attitude of acceptance of students' diversity and different characteristics. Educators need to be consistent and more active in finding solutions to help overcome problems and develop students' potential in learning so that learning can lead students to success in learning (Andini, 2016). According to Corley (2018), differentiation learning (differentiated instruction) conditions educators to design plans to meet the needs of all different students. Breaux and Magee (2017) explain that the teacher's role in differentiation learning is to meet the needs of each student because learning activities are designed to understand a material according to abilities, what is of interest, and the requirements of each student. From this, students are not frustrated and feel disillusioned in their learning experience. Tomlinson (2017) explains that differentiation learning must combine existing differences to obtain information, design an idea, and express what has been learned. Differentiated learning is a series of learning activities implemented by educators to meet the diverse needs of their students.

In differentiation, learning begins with educators realizing that students who will learn are different individuals. Educators must know and appreciate the differences and abilities of students. From this, educators then pay attention to the unique characteristics of other students (Dapa, 2022). Educators must act appropriately in addressing the various characteristics of different students. Educators implement differentiated learning in the context of stimulating students to maximize the absorption of information in learning. With this differentiation learning and various unique characteristics of students, educators feel welcomed and valued, providing material for students' success and development. Students learning needs are met as an actual manifestation of justice in the treatment of learning, namely the existence of educator cooperation and students.

Learning differentiation also refers to the various facilities provided by the different characteristics of students (Gregory & Charolyn, 2017). When students come to school, they bring a variety of abilities that are different from other students, such as experience, talents, interests, language, culture, learning styles, and many other factors. From these differences, educators cannot generalize the abilities of all students by delivering learning material with the same method for all students in class. Educators must provide material according to the needs of each child with different methods. For example, when educators give assignments to students to read, educators need to know the level of ability of each student in reading so that educators can assign students assignments according to their reading level of these students.

There are at least four important aspects of differentiated learning: first, content. Content is material prepared by educators to be taught to students in class. Two methods can be used to create different materials for each lesson: (1) prepare material that is tailored to the level of ability and interest of students; (2) adjust the material to be taught to students. This was conveyed by educators and students based on learning methods that interest each student.

Second, Process. The term "process" refers to students' activities while in class. The activities in question are related to the material being studied by students so that their activities become meaningful. The activities they carry out are assessed qualitatively in the form of feedback notes about what attitudes, knowledge, and skills are still not optimal and need to be improved by students. Activities carried out by students in the class must be adjusted to the readiness, interests of children, and learning styles of students.
Third, Products. This product is the result of the learning that has been carried out to determine the ability of students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding after completing learning material for half a year of study. Products have summative and necessary ratings. Products require more time to complete than students and require broader and deeper knowledge. Therefore, products are completed not only in the classroom but often outdoors as well. Product implementation can be done alone or in groups. If the product is done in groups, the scoring system is determined according to the participation of each group member.

Fourth is the Learning Environment. This learning environment includes the classroom’s personal, social, and physical structure. The learning environment must also be adjusted to students’ readiness, interests, and learning styles so that they are motivated to learn. For example, educators can arrange several student seats on a class bulletin board based on their readiness, interests, and learning styles. Students can sit in large groups or small groups, and they can also work alone or in groups. Educators must create conditions and a pleasant learning environment for students, where they feel safe, comfortable and secure during the learning process because their needs are met.

**Differentiated Learning for Independent Learning**

With the teacher’s ability and skills to implement differentiation learning properly and creatively, the teacher has shown his professionalism in pedagogical competence. Teachers can understand concepts, implement them, and explore differentiation learning based on the circumstances and needs in the classroom. However, it is insufficient if the teacher can only implement and explore differentiation learning. However, the teacher must also be able to contextualize it in the independent learning paradigm. Through this contextualization, differentiation learning gets its meaning. Differentiation learning can build and develop students’ independent learning, which is the foundation of education.

It needs to be understood that the concept of independent learning in differentiation learning refers to more flexible learning activities focusing on students, essential material, and competency and character development (Tohir, 2020). The characteristics presented in independent learning differentiation learning are. First, differentiation learning is project-oriented to develop soft skills and students’ character through the Pancasila Student Profile. Differentiation learning is carried out by organizing various project activities according to the interests and abilities of students. Focus activities by providing wider opportunities for students to actively explore their diverse abilities by discussing actual issues, for example, environmental, health, social, science, religion, and other matters, to support the development of competence and character of students based on the Pancasila Student Profile.

Second, differentiation learning activities focus on essential material whose levels and weights have been adjusted to students’ abilities. Students can get different weights and substance material, but all are organized in the same learning activities (Tomlinson, 2017). The proportionality and weight of varying substance materials make students more creative and explorative in learning. Students will better understand and find substantive and meaningful material because it is relevant to their knowledge and experience. The time for learning activities is also more in-depth because of the suitability of the material with students’ competence. From here, students' understanding, knowledge, and practical abilities are more profound, and they master their basic competencies.

Third, differentiation learning also emphasizes the teacher's flexibility in learning according to the student’s abilities (Sanjaya, 2016). Teachers are more fluid in learning activities because the suitability of the material with competence and interests makes students enthusiastic about learning, namely solving problems and reconstructing them into project results. The flexibility of learning occurs because the teacher is more focused on being a learning companion for students who study in groups with their peers. Students will understand the substance of the material based on the teacher’s explanation and more on the explanations of their different friends, their own experience and practice, and the results of in-depth discussions and simulations. Teachers also move more in giving an argument and working on
students.

From the characteristics of differentiation learning in the context of independent learning, three important foundations can be identified: (1) differentiation learning focuses more on discussing material that is simpler, and more in-depth, and focuses on essential material only so that students can learn more deeply and by the diversity of interests and competence; (2) differentiation learning makes teachers more flexible and flexible in building interactions with students according to the diversity of student development, from this the teacher has the opportunity to develop a curriculum according to the needs and diversity of competencies, interests, and students' characteristics; (3) differentiation learning will be more in line with the differences in students and more interactive because learning focuses on solving problems and project activities which provide opportunities for students to be more active and explore actual issues (Baro’ah, 2020).

Implementation of Differentiation for Independent Learning

By referring to the three important foundations of differentiation learning in the context of independent learning, it can be identified that differentiation learning is in harmony with contextual learning, which is the paradigm of independence. This can be identified in the context of students' abilities and interests, the context of learning materials that must answer actual problems and issues, the context of learning development using projects, and the context of learning outcomes in harmony with the development of different students. For this reason, differentiation learning based on the contextual paradigm can be developed as follows concerning the relevance and context of independent learning.

First, differentiation learning is based on the idea of constructivism. Learning activities prioritize students’ activeness in building their knowledge, competence, and experience. Teachers must understand students’ diversity and differences (Tomlinson & Mc. Tighe, 2016). The teacher gives project-based problems. Furthermore, students learn and perform independently or in groups in solving problems based on their competence, knowledge, and experience. Students explore their knowledge and experience in learning to solve problems (Shihab & Belajar, 2016). From here, students will be able to compile their concepts and findings. From here, students share concepts through knowledge and learning experiences with other students. This will build an active, creative, and productive self-understanding based on previous knowledge and meaningful learning experiences.

Second, learning activities are carried out by inquiry (finding). Inquiry means finding. Differentiation learning in the context of independent learning is carried out by searching for answers to the problems presented by the teacher (Tomlinson & Mc. Tighe, 2016). Problems that have been sorted and selected according to the competence and interests of students. From here, students will be enthusiastic about finding answers to problems as the substance of learning material. This inquiry activity conditions students to think more critically and creatively. Students will be actively involved in the search for truth, information, or knowledge, which is built on students' curiosity. The inquiry will condition students to find answers to problems conveyed through differentiation learning activities.

Third, differentiation learning relies on problem-solving through questioning (asking). From questions that have been designed according to learning materials, the diversity of competencies and interests of students, and actual issues and problems, students will carry out various activities in exploring understanding, experience, and knowledge to answer these questions (Tomlinson & Mc. Tighe, 2016). Questions are the first key in the learning process because students will carry out learning experiments to answer these questions. From this question, students’ thinking competencies are assessed according to their interests (Shihab & Belajar, 2016). Questions are an important key to differentiation learning activities in the context of independent learning. Questions become the driving force for various experimental activities in learning.

Fourth, differentiation learning in the context of independent learning organizes students
according to various abilities and desires to become a learning community (learning community). The scope of the class is described by learning activities that are more oriented towards solving problems through search and experimentation activities carried out in groups. The spirit of learning binds the groups that form the basis of the community to solve problems (Tomlinson & Mc. Tighe, 2016). This study group is not only bound by a common goal in learning. Still, it will also be aware of the important social position that learning is not in a solitary space but in a social space where every interaction will build a collective awareness of knowledge. This is where the learning community will be formed and built through the awareness that is instilled in differentiation learning. Students will always feel bound in learning activities with other people. Learners will become individuals who always want to cooperate with others in learning.

Fifth, the modeling aspect of students in differentiation learning does not rely on the teacher. However, it relies more on peers, other sources, and prototypes displayed in media and learning resources (Tomlinson & Mc. Tighe, 2016). This means that the teacher is not the only primary model. Students are given space according to their interests and abilities in identifying and finding their learning model. In fact, with the design of group-based (community) learning activities and simulations, students can get models from their friends or formulate models in groups (Shihab & Belajar, 2016). Modeling in active, creative, and participatory ways will make identifying and discovering learning models more meaningful because they are based on the interests and awareness of the community. This modeling is usually later, becoming an example that can be imitated and implemented. Usually, this modelling activity can be in the form of how to do something, examples of work, sources, and so on.

Sixth, differentiation learning activities will always involve reflection by students and teachers. This reflection activity is related to reflecting on what has been learned and connecting it to students' practical experiences (Tomlinson & Mc. Tighe, 2016). Students get learning material that tends to be the same, but each must have various experiences. From here, the results of reflection on learning activities submitted by students must be diverse and different (Shihab & Belajar, 2016). This difference will enrich the knowledge and experience of each student. Each learner will get a different point of view in positioning their learning experience. This will further enrich the experience and knowledge of students. Reflection can be a rich source of substantive-subjective learning material with good values. Through this reflection, students will see the meaningfulness of learning activities from a different perspective. A point of view that makes learning activities more meaningful.

Seventh, the results of differentiation learning activities must be assessed. The concept of assessment uses authentic assessment (actual assessment). Assessment that is more based on the reality of learning that has been done by students. In the learning process, the teacher accompanies and simultaneously assesses the activities and abilities of their students (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Assessment to obtain various information related to learning outcomes seen from multiple perspectives. Non-uniform assessment because differentiation learning emphasizes respect for diversity and differences. This actual assessment has been carried out in learning activities through observing attitudes and character, learning performance, learning performance, simulations, and journals of learning activities. This is where an actual assessment of diversity as a basis in differentiation learning is celebrated in the context of independent learning. Each student is special and must be assessed with an authentic model.

With these seven paradigms, professional teachers can implement differentiation learning in the context of independent learning in classrooms at schools. The seven paradigms are sure to be easily practiced by professional teachers. The seven paradigms will be able to make the classroom live because each student will gain independence in differences that are valued and respected by the teacher through creative and participatory learning. Our students are special individuals in their inevitable differences and diversity. They must be honored and rewarded with learning that respects and values them. The seven formulations of the differentiation learning paradigm in the context of independent learning can be the solution. A solution is celebrating appreciation and respect for the differences and diversity of
students who can be organized in more meaningful learning. Where the teacher provides information as the main facilitator, the teacher acts more as a facilitator in teaching and managing various sources and student learning facilities. However, success does not solely lie in the role of the teacher. It lies in how the teacher places or positions students in the classroom. Through different learning, the learning needs of all children are optimally met. Students love to learn and to achieve the benefits of students. Suppose the teacher can develop and apply an existing lesson plan in the learning process. In that case, this is a characteristic that the teacher can improve his ability to carry out daily tasks. From here, with this finding, it is hoped that it can become a new idea that can be a solution to learning so that the learning process can occur more effectively.

4. CONCLUSION

Teacher professionalism in independent differentiation in student learning is the teacher’s active role in actualizing his professional abilities in differentiation learning, which can condition students to become independent individuals in learning. In realizing this, professional teachers must be able to create learning activities based on these three things: First, the teacher has a paradigm view that independent learning differentiation already exists in the classroom. The classroom is positioned as a space for the diversity and diversity of students. Students who study in the classroom are certain to be different in psychological, physiological, social, and belief, cultural aspects. This difference is seen as a privilege that must be explored in independent learning activities. Second, Professional teachers can develop a differentiation design for students’ independent learning. With their professionalism, teachers can design differentiated learning properly and creatively. Learning differentiation can be contextualized in the independent learning paradigm. Through this contextualization, differentiation learning gets its meaning. Differentiation learning can build and develop students’ independent learning, which is the foundation of education. Third, teachers can implement independent differentiation of learning in the classroom through a series of activities: constructivism, inquiry, asking, study groups, modeling, reflection, and authentic assessment.

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