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ORIGINAL

Mentoring in Developing Best Practices for Elementary School Teachers in Indonesia

Mentoría para el desarrollo de mejores prácticas para docentes de escuelas primarias en Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: elementary school teachers face challenges in designing and documenting best practices from their teaching experiences. These difficulties are often caused by a lack of understanding of what constitutes best practices, how to format and write them systematically, and the limited specialized training to support these skills. Teachers need ongoing support through training and technical guidance to develop skills for effectively documenting and disseminating best practices.
Objective: the aim of this community service program is to improve teachers' ability to develop best practices.
Method: this study uses a lesson study method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data was obtained from observing activities during training and filling out descriptive questionnaires.
Results: the methods and teaching materials used by teachers are dominated by methods and sources that are less relevant to the needs of the times. Low student attention, interest, and competence reinforce that there are deficiencies in the learning process. Teachers need e-modules based on local wisdom to help improve cultural literacy and critical thinking skills.
Conclusions: this study concludes that there is a need to develop teaching materials in the form of e-modules developed based on local wisdom that can improve cultural literacy and critical thinking skills for elementary school students.

Keywords: Best Practices; Elementary School; Teachers.

RESUMEN

Introducción: los maestros de escuela primaria enfrentan desafíos al diseñar y documentar las mejores prácticas a partir de sus experiencias docentes. Estas dificultades a menudo son causadas por una falta de comprensión de lo que constituyen las mejores prácticas, cómo formatearlas y escribirlas sistemáticamente, y la limitada capacitación especializada para respaldar estas habilidades. Los docentes necesitan apoyo continuo en forma de capacitación y orientación técnica para desarrollar habilidades que les permitan documentar y difundir eficazmente las mejores prácticas.
Objetivo: el objetivo de este programa de servicio comunitario es mejorar la capacidad de los docentes para desarrollar las mejores prácticas.
Método: la investigación utilizó un método cualitativo descriptivo con cuestionarios, entrevistas e instrumentos de observación.
Resultados: los métodos y materiales didácticos utilizados por los profesores están dominados por métodos y fuentes que son menos relevantes para las necesidades de los tiempos. La baja atención, interés y competencia de los estudiantes refuerzan que existen deficiencias en el proceso de aprendizaje. Los docentes necesitan módulos electrónicos basados en la sabiduría local para ayudar a mejorar la alfabetización cultural y las habilidades de pensamiento crítico.
Conclusiones: la conclusión de este estudio es que existe la necesidad de desarrollar materiales didácticos en forma de módulos electrónicos desarrollados en base a la sabiduría local que puedan mejorar la alfabetización cultural y las habilidades de pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes de escuela primaria.

Palabras clave: Mejores Prácticas; Escuela Primaria; Docentes.

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INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Mengajar Platform was launched with the primary goal of assisting teachers in implementing the Merdeka program by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. This platform offers various resources and tools designed to help teachers easily plan and implement lessons more flexibly and creatively. With features such as learning modules, teaching guides, and spaces for sharing best practices, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform aims to enhance the quality of education across Indonesia.[1] This platform also serves as a strategy to strengthen teachers' skills and ensure the adaptive and relevant implementation of the program in line with current developments.

Teachers play a crucial role in curriculum implementation, as they directly interact with students in the classroom. Teachers are not only content deliverers but also planners, facilitators, motivators, mentors, and evaluators who assist students in developing critical thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to adapt to change.[2,3,4] In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are expected to design and implement lessons in the classroom, including preparing learning objectives, pathways, achievement criteria, teaching modules, and classroom practices in accordance with the standards.[5]

Teachers implement and prepare reports on best practices as part of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation, while also aiming to document the process effectively. This process involves teachers in designing, applying, and evaluating various innovative teaching strategies. To carry out best practices, teachers use student-centered approaches, such as project-based learning and the use of digital technology to enhance student engagement.[6,7] After implementing best practices, teachers prepare reports documenting the planning steps, implementation, outcomes achieved, and reflections on the learning process.[8] By preparing these reports, teachers can share experiences and best practices with colleagues, fostering a collaborative learning community that supports one another. Through this process, teachers play an active role in developing an adaptive and relevant curriculum, ensuring continuous improvement in education quality.

Many teachers face challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools. These issues are caused by several factors, including inadequate facilities and infrastructure, teachers' technological capabilities, a lack of social interaction among teachers, heavy workloads, limited understanding of innovative teaching strategies, and insufficient support or training for teachers.[9,10] Elementary school teachers often struggle to implement and document best practices, even though they play a direct role in applying the Merdeka Curriculum. The challenges teachers face may include time constraints, limited resources, teacher competencies, and a lack of professional support.

One study shows that high administrative burdens, limited access to adequate training, and insufficient school facilities are major obstacles for teachers in implementing and documenting best practices. Many teachers find it difficult to allocate enough time to plan and evaluate best practices amid their heavy teaching schedules. Furthermore, support from schools and education departments is often inadequate, forcing teachers to seek resources and information independently. Teachers also face difficulties in documenting best practices due to a lack of specialized training on how to effectively document teaching.[11,12] A lack of skills in digital literacy and academic writing adds an additional barrier.[13] Teachers need continuous support in the form of training and technical guidance to develop these skills and more effectively document and share their best practices.

Elementary school teachers in the Mirit District of Kebumen Regency in Indonesia face challenges in designing and documenting best practices from their teaching experiences. These difficulties are often caused by a lack of understanding of what constitutes best practices, how to systematically format and write them, and the limited specialized training to support these skills. However, documenting best practices is crucial for sharing innovative experiences and collectively improving the quality of education within the educational community. The results of a pre-survey show an average score of 51,1 (very low) for teachers' understanding of best practices, 51,4 (very low) for interpreting best practices, and 48,6 (very low) for implementing them. In the context of elementary school teachers in Mirit District, Kebumen Regency, Indonesia the need to develop these skills has become increasingly urgent to improve the quality of education in the region. Therefore, mentoring in the preparation of best practices is necessary to equip teachers with the skills to reflect, document, and share their best experiences, thereby creating a broader positive impact. Based on the above, Sebelas Maret University, as one of the Teacher Training Institutes (LPTK), has a responsibility to contribute to solving these issues. Therefore, it is essential to implement the mentoring program for preparing best practices for elementary school teachers in Mirit District, Kebumen Regency, Indonesia. The aim of this community service program is to improve teachers' ability to develop best practices.

METHOD

The activity was carried out in person from April to October 2024. The participants of this community service program consisted of 30 elementary school teachers from the Mirit District of Kebumen Regency in Indonesia. The method of implementation involved providing training by adopting the lesson study approach. This study uses a lesson study method with a qualitative descriptive approach. Data was obtained from observing activities during training and filling out descriptive questionnaires. Lesson study was used as a teacher training and mentoring model, involving collaborative learning analysis and group guidance.[14] The training on documenting best practices for teachers was designed by adopting the lesson study stages, which included three main steps: Plan, Do, and See. In the Plan stage, participants collaborated to understand the concept of best practices and determined the focus of the learning to be implemented and documented. Teachers then designed learning scenarios and prepared action plans based on real classroom experiences. Next, the Do stage involved the implementation of the prepared lesson plans, where teachers carried out the practices in the classroom while noting key points for reflection. Finally, the See stage was used to reflect on the observations, evaluate the effectiveness of the executed plan, and discuss aspects that needed improvement. During this training, teachers were also guided in writing their reflections in a systematic format that met the standards for documenting best practices. By adopting

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these stages, the training not only improved technical writing skills but also strengthened collaboration and a reflective culture among teachers. The teachers' skills were assessed before and after the mentoring through a questionnaire based on understanding, interpretation, and implementation aspects. The following is a grid of instruments for measuring teacher abilities.

Table 1. Questionnaire Framework

Aspect	Indicator
Understanding	Understanding the meaning of best practices
	Understanding the types of best practices
	Understanding the structure for writing best practices
	Understanding the ideas behind best practices
	Understanding the categories of best practice ideas
	Understanding the content of ideas
	Understanding the systematics
Interpretation	Access to LMS features for best practices
	Using stories as a source of ideas
	Developing the elements of best practice writing
Implementation	Ability to find ideas
	Ability to prepare best practice reports
	Ability to share best practices

The results of the training were then categorized to assess its success level. The table of success criteria is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Success Criteria for Mentoring

Score	Criteria
90	Very High
80-89	High
70-79	Moderate
60-69	Low
<60	Very Low

Source: book "Penilaian Hasil Pembelajaran di Sekolah"[15]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The activity of preparing best practices for elementary school teachers in the Mirit District of Kebumen Regency in Indonesia was attended by 30 elementary school teachers. The training activity was carried out using the lesson study approach. The implementation of the activities is presented in table 3.

Table 3. Implementation of Mentoring Activities

Activity	Method	Implementation
Orientation and Material Explanation	Workshop	20 and 27 April 2024
Guided Practice in Designing Best Practice Plans	Practice	11 and 18 May 2024
Implementation of Best Practice Lesson Plans	Practice	August 2024
Preparation of Best Practice Learning Report	Practice	14 September 2024
Reflection and Evaluation	Workshop	5 October 2024

Source: implementation of community service research

As the initial activity, an orientation and material explanation session was held. The orientation and material explanation in the mentoring process of preparing best practices aimed to provide teachers with a comprehensive understanding of the basic concepts, objectives, and benefits of best practices in teaching. During this phase, the definition of best practices, the characteristics of effective best practices, and the systematic steps for planning and documenting them were explained. Teachers were also given an overview of the structure for writing best practices, which includes the background, implementation process, outcomes, and reflections from the learning experience. Additionally, this session introduced the guidelines and standard formats that would be used throughout

the preparation process. The orientation was expected to create a shared understanding and motivate teachers to actively engage in the entire mentoring process, with the goal of producing high-quality best practice documentation that would be beneficial for their professional development. As professionals, teachers should possess the ability to research and analyze, especially when creating best practices.[16]



Figure 1. Orientation and Presentation

The next activity was guided practice in designing best practice learning plans. This guided practice session was designed to provide elementary school teachers with hands-on experience in designing and documenting best practices based on their teaching experiences. During this session, participants were assisted in identifying the main focus of their best practices, such as innovative methods, successful teaching strategies, or creative approaches to addressing classroom challenges. Teachers were then guided to systematically design the structure of their best practices, starting from defining the background, objectives, implementation steps, and success indicators. Teachers received direct feedback throughout the planning process, ensuring that the plans they developed adhered to the guidelines and were relevant to the elementary school teaching context. Through this activity, teachers gained not only theoretical understanding but also practical skills in documenting best practices that were ready to be implemented and shared. By practicing the concepts or materials learned, teachers were able to deepen their understanding and make it more applicable in their classrooms.[17]



Figure 2. Guided Practice in Designing Best Practice Plans

The activity of implementing best practice learning was designed to provide teachers with the opportunity to apply the plans they had created in real classroom settings. In this phase, teachers implemented lessons according to the best practice plans they had

developed, focusing on the application of methods or strategies deemed innovative and effective. During the implementation, the teaching process was observed by fellow teachers to record key points, such as the success of the strategies, challenges that arose, and student responses. The data collected during this phase served as material for reflection to refine the best practice documentation. This activity not only helped teachers evaluate the implementation of their plans but also provided valuable experience for continuously improving the quality of teaching.



Figure 3. Implementation of Best Practice Learning

The next activity was the preparation of the best practice learning report, where teachers were guided to document the entire process of the best practices they had implemented, starting from the background, objectives, implementation steps, results achieved, and reflections on the learning experience. Teachers were taught to write the report systematically, following the format and guidelines provided, so that the final document would be informative and easy to understand. Additionally, facilitators provided feedback to ensure that the report reflected relevant teaching practices that could be applied by other teachers. This report not only serves as tangible evidence of the best practices carried out but also becomes a source of inspiration and knowledge-sharing material to enhance the quality of education in elementary schools.[18]



Figure 4. Preparation of Best Practice Report

The reflection and evaluation activity was the final and crucial phase in the mentoring process for preparing best practices for elementary school teachers, aimed at reviewing the entire process and the results achieved. In this session, participants discussed their experiences during the implementation of the best practices, including successes, challenges, and the lessons learned. Reflection was conducted to explore how effective the best practices were in improving the quality of teaching and the relevance of the

documentation produced. Evaluation also included an assessment of the report format, the alignment of content with the guidelines, and the potential for further development. Through this activity, teachers not only received constructive feedback but also identified opportunities to improve or enrich their best practices in the future. The reflection and evaluation process was expected to foster an ongoing reflective culture, contributing to the continuous enhancement of teacher professionalism.



Figure 5. Reflection and Evaluation Activity

After the mentoring activity, the teachers' ability in preparing best practices was assessed. The improvement was evident from the average scores of the pre-test and post-test questionnaires filled out by the participants. The questionnaire was designed to evaluate three aspects: understanding, interpretation, and implementation. The improvement in the teachers' ability to document best practices can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the Questionnaire on Preparing and Using Students' Worksheet Based on the Scientific Approach Before and After Training

Aspect	Indicator	Before Training		After Training	
		Average	Category	Average	Category
Understanding	Understanding the meaning of best practices	62,5	Low	80	High
	Understanding the types of best practices	56,7	Very Low	80	High
	Understanding the structure for writing best practices	50	Very Low	84,2	High
	Understanding the ideas behind best practices	52,5	Very Low	85,8	High
	Understanding the categories of best practice ideas	46,7	Very Low	86,7	High
	Understanding the content of ideas	45,8	Very Low	80,8	High
	Understanding the systematics	43,3	Very Low	87,5	High
Interpretation	Access to LMS features for best practices	51,6	Very Low	85	High
	Using stories as a source of ideas	55	Very Low	82,5	High
	Developing the elements of best practice writing	47,5	Very Low	77,5	Moderate
Implementation	Ability to find ideas	50,8	Very Low	87,5	High
	Ability to prepare best practice reports	49,2	Very Low	81,7	High
	Ability to share best practices	45,8	Very Low	89,2	High

The understanding of teachers regarding best practices in learning improved after participating in the mentoring program, as the activities were systematically designed to help teachers understand the concepts, develop plans, and implement best practices directly. Mentoring typically involves experience-based methods such as simulations, group reflections, and constructive feedback, allowing teachers to learn from their own experiences as well as from their peers. For example, research has shown that the STAR format (Situation, Task, Action, Reflection) approach helps teachers design best practices more systematically, thereby enhancing their understanding of applying innovative learning strategies in the classroom. Mentoring also allows teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching strategies and identify areas for improvement.[19]

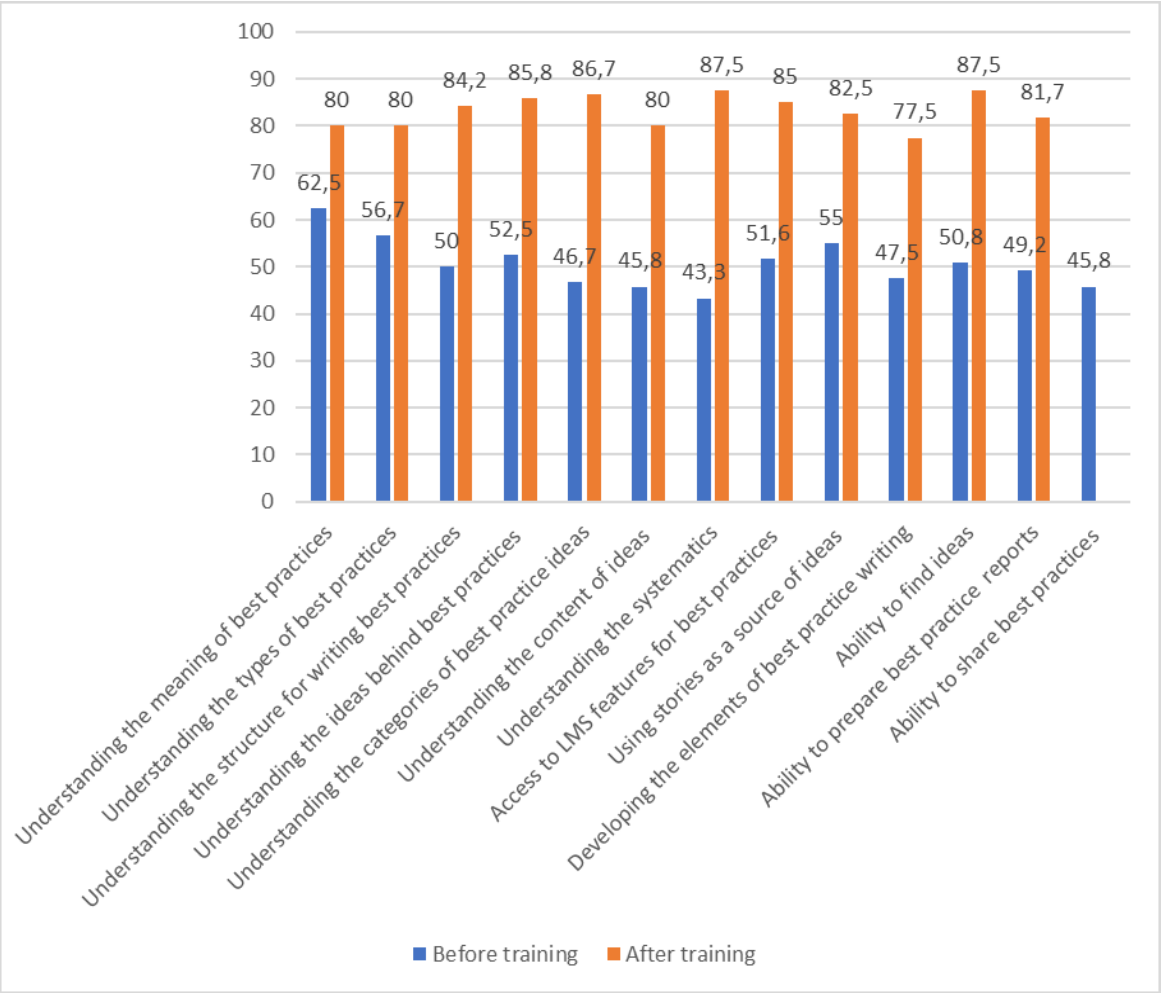


Figure 6. Results of the Questionnaire on Preparing and Using Students' Worksheet Based on the Scientific Approach Before and After Training

Teachers' perceptions of best practice in learning improved after participating in the mentoring program because the program provided a deeper understanding of the concept and benefits of best practices, while also raising awareness of the importance of reflection and innovation in teaching. Mentoring usually includes theoretical explanations, discussions, and hands-on practices, enabling teachers to evaluate their experiences more objectively. With the increase in understanding and skills, teachers not only gained a greater appreciation for the concept of best practices but also became more capable of applying them in real-world contexts. Ultimately, this strengthened their positive perception of the benefits of best practices in improving the quality of education, as understanding has a positive relationship with perception.[20]

CONCLUSIONS

The mentoring program for preparing best practices for elementary school teachers in Mirit District, Kebumen Regency, Indonesia was successfully carried out. The steps in the mentoring activities included orientation, material presentation, guided practice in designing best practices, implementing the plans, preparing the best practice reports, and reflection and evaluation. The results of this program show an improvement in teachers' ability to develop best practices, as seen in the aspects of understanding, interpretation, and implementation. Each of these aspects now falls into the "high" category, whereas previously they were in the "low" and "very low" categories.

The expectation from this program is that teachers become more skilled in reflecting on their teaching experiences. Additionally, the ability to write best practice reports also increases the opportunities for teachers to share their experiences in broader educational forums, thus making their contributions to the development of education more significant. In the long term, this activity can encourage the creation of a culture of innovation and reflection in teaching practices at the elementary school level.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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