



## Participatory Collaboration between University and School in Improving the Quality of Learning in MAS Darussalam Maros

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**Abstract:** Teacher competency development is an important aspect in improving the quality of learning. The program of Kemahiran Mengajar Aplikasi Lapangan (KEMAL) is designed to provide hands-on teaching experience for students of Universitas Muslim Maros at MAS Darussalam Maros, South Sulawesi. The aim of this activity is to improve pedagogical competence, creativity in learning methods, and classroom management of students through participatory interactions with supervising teachers, principals, and students. The methods used include field observation, preparation of action plans, teaching practice, intensive mentoring, evaluation, and reflection. The results of this community service show an increase in students' competence in compiling teaching materials, managing classes, and implementing creative learning strategies that are adaptive to students' character. The active involvement of the school community encourages the creation of a participatory and conducive learning atmosphere. The implications of this activity show that the integration of field practice with a collaborative and reflective approach is effective in shaping the professionalism of prospective teachers and improving the quality of learning in partner schools. The novelty of this program lies in its sustainable and contextual participatory mentoring model.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation in forming qualified human resources. The educational process does not only emphasize cognitive aspects, but also demands competent pedagogical skills from prospective educators (Amrahli, 2025; Komariah et al., 2023). In line with that, Althubyani (2024) stated that universities have a strategic role in preparing prospective teacher students through various forms of field practice activities.

Universities have an important role in improving the quality of learning in schools by providing competent and trained teaching staff (Moscardini et al., 2022; Obolewicz et al., 2023; Wangdi & Shimray, 2022). Besides that, universities become research centers that produce learning innovations that can be adopted by schools (Aithal & Maiya, 2023; Fabbri et al., 2023). Community service programs carried out by universities also help schools develop more effective learning methods and tools (Claes et al., 2022; Gonzalez, 2023). Thus, collaboration between universities and schools can create a more advanced and sustainable educational

ecosystem.

Collaboration between universities and schools is important to ensure the transfer of knowledge and more up-to-date learning practices (Sillaots et al., 2024; Wang & Wong, 2023). Through this collaboration, schools can obtain academic support and educational innovations that are relevant to the needs of the times. This synergy ultimately encourages an overall improvement in the quality of education.

One of the activities designed by Universitas Muslim Maros to hone students' teaching skills is the program of *Kemahiran Mengajar Aplikasi Lapangan (KEMAL)*. This program is a bridge between the academic world and the reality of learning in schools. *KEMAL* provides opportunities for students to apply educational theories that have been learned during lectures. Through this activity, students can experience firsthand the dynamics of learning in the classroom. This real experience is very necessary to form pedagogical, professional, social and personality competencies. The interaction among students and their mentor teachers and students is an important part of the practice-oriented learning process. Therefore, this *KEMAL* is an effective strategy in producing prospective educators who are ready to enter the field.

The two-month implementation of *KEMAL* provides sufficient time for observation, teaching practice, and ongoing reflection. This time allows students to understand the school situation comprehensively. Students can follow school routines, understand students' characteristics, and adapt their teaching style to class needs. Regular interaction with teachers and school officials also strengthens the academic supervision process. In this way, the experience gained becomes more profound and meaningful.

*Madrasah Aliyah Swasta (MAS) Darussalam Maros* as the location for implementing *KEMAL*, has the characteristics of a *madrasah* school that emphasizes religious values. A religious school environment adds its own color to the learning process. University students get the opportunity to see the integration between general education and religious education. It enriches the university students' insight into value-based education models. In addition, the diversity of learners at the school presents its own challenges for developing teaching skills.

The environment of *MAS Darussalam Maros* shows the growing educational conditions with the support of fairly well-organized school management. Learning facilities are adequately available, although some facilities still require development to support a more interactive learning process. The diverse character of learners demands a learning approach that is adaptive and responsive to individual needs. Teachers at this school demonstrate a high level of commitment in guiding students, but still need innovation in learning strategies. Overall, the objective conditions of this school provide ample space for students to learn,

practice, and contribute to improving the quality of learning. The involvement of the supervising lecturers in the *KEMAL* activity is very important to ensure the smooth running of the student mentoring process. The supervising lecturers plays a role in providing direction before, during, and after the implementation of the practicum. They help students design learning tools and evaluate the teaching process objectively.

Community service is one of the *Tri Dharma* of Higher Education that must be realized by lecturers. Involvement in the *KEMAL* program can be considered as a form of direct contribution to the community through developing the quality of education in partner schools. According to Droissart and Tuytens (2024), lecturers do not only guide students, but also collaborate with teachers to improve the quality of learning. It developed the finding of the research by Sinnayah et al. (2024), that this collaboration can produce new ideas that are relevant to developments in the world of education. Therefore, this activity provides double benefits for the campus and the school.

This community service report was compiled to document the mentoring process during the implementation of *KEMAL*. This documentation is important as a form of academic accountability for activities that have taken place. In addition, this report is expected to be a reference for other lecturers who will carry out similar mentoring. Systematic presentation of experiences can provide a clearer picture of the challenges and opportunities in field practice activities. Thus, this article has significant academic and practical value.

Various learning dynamics emerge as part of the student adaptation process at school. Research conducted by Qorib (2024) found that university students can face diverse classroom situations in terms of school students' abilities and characters. Alasmari and Althaqafi (2024) stated that those challenges help students hone their classroom management skills and learning strategies. The supervision process from the supervising lecturer and mentor teacher becomes a means of constructive evaluation (Damoah & Khalo, 2024). Ultimately, this experience encourages students to become more reflective and adaptive as future educators.

This article identifies *KEMAL*'s contribution to improving student competency. These competencies include the ability to compile teaching materials, implement learning, and conduct authentic evaluations. Ma (2023) stated that hands-on experience in the classroom provides space for students to practice developing creative teaching methods. Besides that, students can understand the learning needs of students more realistically (Fernandez et al., 2023; Iyamuremye et al., 2023; Malik & Zhu, 2023). Thus, *KEMAL* becomes a comprehensive learning tool.

The main issue in this community service focuses on improving university students' teaching skills through intensive mentoring in a values-based school environment such as *MAS Darussalam Maros*. The subject of community service was chosen because this school provides a rich and relevant learning context for students to develop pedagogical competencies in a real way. According to Duisenbayev et al. (2024) mentoring activities can encourage students to become more reflective, adaptive, and professional prospective educators. Ultimately, the targeted social change is to improve the quality of the learning process in schools and to build a collaborative culture between campuses and schools in developing education.

Overall, *KEMAL* activities at *MAS Darussalam Maros* are an important momentum in developing the professionalism of prospective teachers. This program provides field experience that cannot be obtained through classroom theory alone. The involvement of the supervising lecturer ensures that students receive appropriate academic guidance during the practicum process. This article is presented as a form of reflection and documentation of the entire series of activities. This community service report in the form of an article is expected to provide insight for various parties interested in educational development.

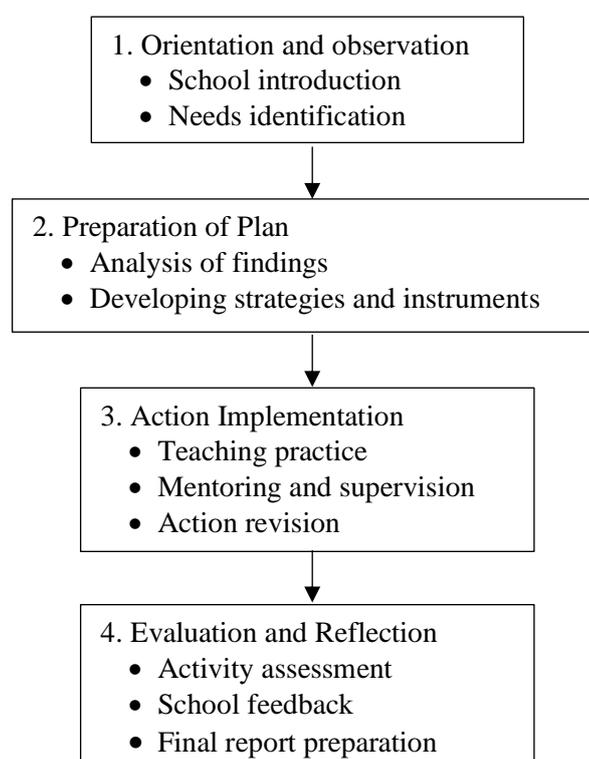
## 2. METHOD

The action planning process was carried out through initial coordination between the supervising lecturer, the school, and the *KEMAL* student participants to agree on the objectives and form of mentoring activities. Those initial meetings were used to identify the school's needs, determine the roles of each party, and develop a realistic work plan. The school community—including mentor teachers and madrasah principals—is actively involved so that planning reflects the real conditions of learning in the school at *MAS Darussalam Maros*. Bela et al. (2025) stated that through this participatory approach, the resulting action plan becomes more contextual, focused, and can be implemented effectively during the activity.

The subjects of this community service are five students from Universitas Muslim Maros—three from the English Language Education Study Program and two from the Indonesian Language Education Study Program—who were directly accompanied by field supervisors. Activities are carried out at *MAS Darussalam Maros* located at *Masjid Raya* street, Barandasi, Allepolea, Lau, Maros, South Sulawesi. The school community consisting of the principal, teachers, mentor teachers, and students were also involved as parties who interacted directly with students. All assisted subjects played an active role in the community planning and organizing process, so that community service activities could be structured in a participatory, relevant manner, and in accordance with the real needs of the school.

The research strategy used in this community service activity was a participatory approach through field observation, informal interviews, and structured reflection to understand learning needs at *MAS Darussalam* Maros. This strategy allows supervisors and students to directly identify key issues and design targeted interventions (Roque et al., 2024). The activity stages include initial orientation and observation, developing an action plan, implementing teaching practice, and mentoring, and concluding with evaluation and reflection with the school community. By following these stages systematically, community service activities can achieve the goal of improving student competency while making a real contribution to the quality of learning in partner schools (Rahmawati et al., 2025; Sankofa, 2023).

Based on the description of the planning process that has been explained, the stages of these activities can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Stages of the Activity Implementation.

### 3. RESULT

The implementation of *KEMAL* activities at *MAS Darussalam* Maros is running according to the plan that was prepared in the action planning stage. The *KEMAL* team conducted initial observations to understand school conditions, student characteristics, and current learning practices.



**Figure 2.** Orientation and Observation.

The action plan preparation stage involves those 5 university students, supervising lecturer, mentor teachers, and the principal of *MAS Darussalam* in a participatory manner. Those 5 students designed learning strategies and teaching media based on the results of needs identification in the field. Supervisors provided critical feedback to refine the plans and make them more applicable. The collaboration ensured that teaching plans could be implemented effectively during teaching practice.



**Figure 3.** Preparation of Plan.

During the action, the university students took turns teaching in various classes under the guidance of lecturer and supervising teachers. They applied creative and interactive learning methods, adapting their teaching style to the students' character.

#### **Figure 4. Community Service Team with the Principal and Teachers**

Students of *MAS Darussalam* demonstrated positive responses through active engagement in learning activities. This process strengthens their pedagogical competence and increases their confidence in the classroom.



**Figure 5. Action Implementation.**

Mentoring by the supervising lecturer and mentor teachers was carried out routinely through daily supervision and reflection. The university students received constructive feedback on methods, material delivery, and classroom management. This evaluation helped those students to adjust teaching strategies in real time. As a result, the quality of the learning process experienced a significant increase during the activity.



**Figure 6. Action Implementation.**

The involvement of the school community, including the principal, teachers, and students, had a positive impact on the implementation of *KEMAL*. The university students could learn to communicate effectively and build professional relationships with school teachers and learners. The school students gained a more varied and enjoyable learning experience through the teaching methods used. It encouraged a more conducive and participatory learning climate in the classroom.



**Figure 7.** Action Implementation.

Analysis of the results showed that students experienced increased competency in developing teaching materials, managing classes, and assessing the learning process. The university students also became more reflective about the teaching strategies they implemented and were able to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. The supervising teacher appreciated the university students' increasingly developing teaching skills. This shows that *KEMAL* is effective as a means of developing the professionalism of prospective teachers.



**Figure 8.** Community Service Team with Students of *MAS Darussalam*.

Overall, this community service activity provides dual benefits for students and partner schools. The university students gain practical experience that supports their pedagogical and professional competencies. Meanwhile, the school gains tangible benefits in the quality of learning through the university students' creative interventions. These results emphasize the importance of field practice programs as a bridge between educational theory and practice.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The results of the implementation of *KEMAL* show that university students are able to apply educational theory in real life in the classroom, in accordance with the aim of improving pedagogical and professional competence. Observation experiences, lesson plan preparation,

and teaching practice have proven effective in shaping university students' adaptability to the diverse characters of school students. The active participation of mentor teachers and principals strengthens the collaboration between university and school, so that the interventions provided are more contextual and relevant. This is in line with the background of the *KEMAL* program as a bridge between the academic world and educational practices in the field.

This community service activity also emphasizes the development of creative learning strategies and effective classroom management, in accordance with the focus issues identified previously. The positive impact is seen from increased student engagement and a more conducive classroom atmosphere, confirming the importance of an interactive approach in learning. Analysis of the results shows that the university students gain not only teaching experiences, but also critical reflection on real educational practices. Thus, *KEMAL* makes a significant contribution to the goal of developing the professionalism of prospective teachers and improving the quality of learning in partner schools.

The results of this community service show that direct practice in the classroom is able to improve university students' pedagogical competence, in line with the theory of experiential learning studied by Amrahli (2025), where effective learning occurs through experience and reflection. A participatory approach involving mentor teachers and principals supports the theory of situated learning, studied by Ma (2023) which emphasizes the importance of social context in the learning process.

Furthermore, the improvement of university students' classroom management skills and learning strategies is also consistent with the concept of constructivist teaching developed by Damoah and Khalo (2024), where learning is built through active interaction between teachers and students. In addition, active student involvement confirms the theory of student-centered learning (Qorib, 2024), which emphasizes the role of students as the center of the learning process. Thus, these findings confirm that the combination of practical experience, reflection, and social collaboration is effective in forming professional and adaptive prospective teachers.

The findings of this community service show that the direct application of learning theory in the classroom can improve university students' pedagogical and professional competencies. Through practical experience, reflection, and guidance from mentor teachers, university students learn to manage classes, develop teaching materials, and adapt teaching methods to learners' needs. The results of this interaction create changes in student learning behavior that are more active and participatory, in line with the principles of student-based learning (Duisenbayev et al., 2024). In the social level, collaborative engagement between

campuses and schools strengthens a more professional, adaptive, and learning-oriented educational culture in the school community.

The findings of this community service develop previous research on experiential learning by Fabbri et al. (2023) and Iyamuremye et al. (2023), where university students develop knowledge and competencies through a cycle of concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. Furthermore, university students' involvement in the school community as part of teaching practice supports the perspective of the situated learning by Ma (2023), namely learning that occurs in real social contexts and through participation in communities of practice. In addition, collaboration between students, supervising teachers, and principals can be studied through a framework of communities of practice, where the exchange of teaching experiences and pedagogical practices strengthens shared knowledge and professional identity. Through the lens of constructive alignment, the learning interventions designed by university students—from teaching tool planning to collaborative evaluation—demonstrate alignment between learning activities, teaching objectives, and assessments, thereby driving social transformation in the form of improved learning quality in partner schools.

This community service activity presents a novelty through the integration of university students teaching practices with a participatory approach that involves the entire school community. The university students do not only focus on mastering the material, but also develop adaptability skills, creativity in learning methods, and real classroom management. Intensive collaboration among university students, mentor teachers, and the school principal creates a contextual and sustainable mentoring model. This innovation produces a social change, namely improving the learning quality and strengthening the collaborative culture between university and partner schools.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The community service activity packaged in the form of *KEMAL* at *MAS Darussalam Maros* It has succeeded in improving university students' pedagogical and professional competencies through teaching practice, lecturer mentoring, and collaboration with mentor teachers. The participatory approach and systematic stages, from observation to evaluation, allow for interventions that are contextual and relevant to the school's needs. The results of this community service show the increase of student engagement, the quality of the learning process, and the creation of a collaborative culture between university and school. Thus, this program produces a real contribution in developing the pedagogical competency of prospective

teachers and improving the quality of learning in partner schools.

Theoretically, this *KEMAL* activity reaffirms the importance of experiential learning and situated learning in shaping the competencies of prospective teachers through real experiences and the social context of learning. Based on these findings, it is recommended that similar teaching practice programs be continuously developed by every educational college with a participatory approach that involves the entire school community. In addition, ongoing collaboration between university and school is expected to strengthen the culture of professionalism and pedagogical innovation in the long term. It is suggested that *KEMAL* activity be carried out routinely in various partner schools to continuously improve the quality of learning and the competence of prospective teachers on an ongoing basis.

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