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**INCREASING STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT  
THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING AND  
DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION MODELS AT SMA NEGERI 6 KABUPATEN  
LAMPUNG TIMUR**

**SEPTIA USWATUN HASANAH<sup>1</sup>**

**MUHAMMAD ZAJULI<sup>2</sup>**

**<sup>12</sup>UNIVERSITAS SANG BUMI RUWA JURAI**

<sup>1</sup> [septiauswatunhasanah@gmail.com](mailto:septiauswatunhasanah@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Education plays a vital role in shaping excellent and adaptive human resources, which are the foundation of national development. However, the low interest and academic achievement of students—particularly in the subject of Indonesian language—remain a prevalent issue. One contributing factor is the use of outdated and less innovative teaching methods that do not meet students' needs. This study aims to improve student engagement and academic achievement through the integration of differentiated instruction within a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model, focusing on news text material. The research method used was classroom action research (CAR) based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, implemented in two cycles. The research subjects were 36 eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 6 in East Lampung Regency. Data collection techniques included tests, observation, and documentation. The results showed an increase in learning engagement from 67% in the pre-cycle to 78% in cycle I, and 84% in cycle II. Meanwhile, academic mastery increased from 56% to 69%, and then to 89% across the same phases. These findings indicate that integrating differentiated instruction into the PBL model has a positive impact on the quality of Indonesian language learning.

**Keywords:** Differentiated Instruction, Problem-Based Learning, Student Engagement, Academic Achievement

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a crucial instrument for developing high-quality and competitive human resources, which form the foundation for a nation's progress. Through quality education, it is expected that intelligent, resilient generations will emerge who are capable of responding to global challenges. In this context, the Indonesian national education system is designed in accordance with Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. This law affirms that education aims to enlighten the life of the nation, as mandated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, making education a key pillar in building a superior and competent society (Fitri, 2021).

Indonesian language, as a compulsory subject at all levels of education, plays a dual role: as a symbol of national identity and unity, and as a medium for developing students' communication skills. The teaching of Indonesian is expected to equip students with practical language skills. However, in reality, students' interest and participation in Indonesian

language classes remain low (Failasufa et al., 2022), often due to monotonous and non-contextual teaching methods that make learning less engaging.

Teaching methods that rely heavily on memorization without involving active interaction result in passive student engagement. This affects learning outcomes, making them suboptimal and inconsistent with learning objectives. To address this issue, a more adaptive, creative, and contextual learning approach is required—one that aligns with students' needs and characteristics.

Parental involvement also plays a crucial role in fostering students' learning spirit. Consistent family support strengthens students' internal motivation and fosters positive synergy between home and school environments (Nurhaliza et al., 2024). Successful learning is not solely determined by the teacher's strategy but also by collaborative support from all stakeholders.

Effective teaching will significantly impact students' competencies, especially in Indonesian language skills. Teachers must implement strategies

that actively engage students. Using fun, varied approaches tailored to students' interests can create a more vibrant and productive classroom environment (Rustandi et al., 2023).

Each student has different backgrounds, interests, learning styles, and abilities. Therefore, teachers should design instruction that accommodates these differences. The principle of "teaching according to the nature of the student and the times," as taught by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, is relevant for helping students discover and develop their potential (Pahdianti et al., 2023). One such approach is differentiated instruction, which allows students to learn based on their individual needs and characteristics.

Differentiated instruction emphasizes the importance of flexible strategies in content delivery, learning processes, and products. It gives students the opportunity to choose their preferred learning method—visual, auditory, or kinesthetic (Tomlinson, 2014; Wahyuningsari et al., 2022). This personalized and humanistic approach helps students better understand material and prevents boredom or learning failure.

This strategy can be integrated with the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model, which places students at the center of learning and encourages them to solve real-life problems (Ramadhan, 2021). With clear syntax, the model enhances critical thinking and collaboration through group discussion and independent exploration (Purwati et al., 2023).

Observations and interviews at SMA Negeri 6 East Lampung Regency revealed that student interest in Indonesian language lessons remains low. Most students were passive, with few actively asking or answering questions. This passivity contributed to poor learning outcomes, partly due to continued use of conventional methods that do not effectively engage students.

Based on these findings, the researchers were motivated to implement the Problem-Based Learning model combined with differentiated instruction to improve student engagement and learning achievement. News text was chosen as the focus material due to its relevance, contextual nature, and literacy-enhancing potential. The study was conducted as classroom action research

aimed at evaluating and improving student-centered learning practices.

## **METHOD**

This study is a type of classroom action research (CAR) aimed at improving the quality of the learning process based on issues found in the classroom. The research design follows the spiral model by Kemmis and McTaggart, consisting of four main stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. These stages are carried out in two cycles to ensure continuous improvement in the learning process (Prihantoro & Hidayat, 2019).

### **Research Subjects**

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 6 East Lampung Regency. The subjects were 36 students from class XI K. The primary focus was to improve students' engagement and achievement in the Indonesian language, specifically on the topic of news texts.

### **Research Variables**

There were two variables in this study:

Independent variable: The application of differentiated instruction integrated with the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model.

Dependent variable: Students' engagement and academic achievement.

### **Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

To ensure valid and comprehensive data, three main data collection techniques were used:

- Tests: Administered at the end of each cycle to measure student achievement based on predetermined indicators.
- Observation: Used to assess student engagement during the learning process through observation sheets covering eight aspects, such as participation, questioning, and group work.
- Documentation: Included photos, videos, and activity notes to support analysis of learning outcomes and processes during the cycles.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

Quantitative data obtained from

engagement observations and test results were analyzed using percentage calculations.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **RESULT**

#### **1. Pre-Cycle Results**

The pre-cycle activities were conducted on February 12, 2025. Initially, students were asked to complete a learning style questionnaire as part of the online diagnostic assessment. The results were used to design differentiated instruction strategies. Teaching in this phase used conventional methods without innovative strategies.

Observations showed that student engagement averaged 67%. The average score for the formative test was 68.5, with a classical mastery level of 56%. These results indicated that most students had not met the minimum mastery criteria. This highlighted the need for adaptive instructional improvements.

#### **2. Cycle I Results**

Cycle I was conducted from February 17–19, 2025. The action taken was the integration of content-based

differentiated instruction into the PBL model. Teachers provided material with varying difficulty levels based on students' learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Engagement increased to 78%, categorized as 'active'. The indicators included group participation, problem identification, initiative in asking questions and providing solutions, teamwork, and group presentation. Meanwhile, the average academic score rose to 73, and mastery level reached 69%. However, time management and classroom atmosphere still needed improvement, prompting the next cycle.

#### **3. Cycle II Results**

Cycle II was held from February 24–28, 2025, with improvements based on the previous cycle's evaluation. Adjustments included stronger class agreements and more effective groupings. The approach emphasized process-based differentiation, with special support for lower-achieving groups.

Engagement rose to 84%, categorized as 'very active'. Academic achievement also significantly

improved, with an average score of 82 and mastery level of 89%.

## **DISCUSSION**

The increase in student engagement and achievement from the pre-cycle to Cycle II demonstrates that integrating differentiated instruction into the PBL model significantly improves learning quality. Students found the learning process more meaningful because it was aligned with their individual learning styles and abilities.

Engagement data showed progressive improvement:

- Pre-cycle: 67%
- Cycle I: 78%
- Cycle II: 84%

Meanwhile, academic mastery also showed positive growth:

- Pre-cycle: 56%
- Cycle I: 69%
- Cycle II: 89%

These findings are consistent with Damayanti et al. (2023) and Anam & Wijaya (2023), who concluded that differentiated strategies combined with PBL encourage active engagement and improve academic performance. This

approach also proves to be more adaptive to student diversity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the classroom action research conducted over two cycles at SMA Negeri 6 East Lampung Regency, it can be concluded that the application of differentiated instruction integrated with the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model effectively increases student engagement and academic achievement in Indonesian language, particularly in news text material.

Engagement improved steadily from 67% (pre-cycle) to 78% (Cycle I), and 84% (Cycle II), indicating significant student involvement. Academic mastery also increased from 56% (pre-cycle) to 69% (Cycle I), and 89% (Cycle II). Average class scores showed consistent improvement in each cycle. Therefore, the integrative strategy between PBL and differentiated instruction can serve as an alternative solution for more contextual, adaptive, and student-centered Indonesian language learning.

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