



The Implementation of “Independent Curriculum” at Tenth Grade Student of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang

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Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Independent Curriculum across various subjects in SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang, with a focus on the alignment of teaching modules with specified phases. Utilizing a qualitative descriptive method, the research captures real-world data through observations and descriptive analyses. The findings indicate that the Independent Curriculum has been effectively implemented at tenth grade English subjects, incorporating differentiated learning and the use of digital resources. Teachers adapt teaching materials based on student data, facilitate student potential development, and actively communicate with parents. Evaluation methods include formative assessments and reinforcement for material mastery. Challenges faced include teacher preparedness and student engagement, addressed through preparatory measures and creating a conducive learning environment.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, implementation, teaching module

1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum and learning have a very central position (importance) in education. Curriculum as written material or educational program (ideal curriculum) with more emphasis on operational learning process (real curriculum). The curriculum related to the content/material that must be learned while the learning is related to the way to learn it (Syam, 2017). Effective learning relies on having a well-defined curriculum as a guide, and conversely, a curriculum lacks significance without the actual implementation of learning. The curriculum serves as a roadmap, offering direction and guidance for carrying out the learning process. It plays a crucial role in directing various learning activities towards the attainment of educational objectives.

The curriculum was a guide in the implementation of educational activities in schools for various stakeholders, both directly and indirectly involved. These stakeholders included teachers, school administrators, supervisors, parents, the community, and the students themselves (Otang Kurniawan, 2017). A curriculum served as a meticulously crafted framework that imparted an organized and systematic structure to the process of learning. It delineated the subjects to be covered, defined the learning objectives, and outlined the instructional methods employed, thus establishing a cohesive plan aimed at realizing specific educational outcomes.

Schools are supposed to be comfortable and inspiring places for educational actors, including students, teachers, and teachers (Fikri et al., 2025). The design of a curriculum was intricately linked to the educational goals and mission of an institution. It acted as a mirror reflecting the aspirations of the educational system, guaranteeing that the chosen content and instructional approaches harmonized seamlessly with the overarching objectives of the learning experience. In essence, the curriculum was a strategic tool that not only guided the educational journey but also ensured alignment with the broader vision and purpose of the institution.

Education system in Indonesia, there have been eleven changes in the curriculum, starting in 1947 with a very simple curriculum and continuing until the latest, which is the 2013 curriculum. Despite the frequent changes in curriculum, the ultimate goal remains the improvement of the previous curriculum (Sumarsih, 2022). In an effort to recover learning, educational institutions are given the option to implement curriculum according to the needs of the learners. Three curriculum options are available, namely the 2013 Curriculum, the Emergency Curriculum (a simplified version of the 2013 Curriculum by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Research and Technology), and the Independent Curriculum. Policies for learning recovery, including the use of the Independent Curriculum, are implemented to address disparities in students' competency achievement resulting from the learning crisis.

The educational curriculum in SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang has undergone several changes from 1998 to 2024. For Vocational High Schools (SMK), the curriculum used sequentially includes the 1994 Curriculum

(1994–1999), the 1999 Curriculum (1999–2006), the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP 2006) (2006–2013), the 2013 Curriculum (2013–2019), and the Independent Curriculum, which began to be implemented in 2023. It is important to note that the Independent Curriculum for SMK is being implemented gradually and is tailored to vocational needs.

As the primary actors in the field of education, teachers must always be prepared for any policy changes that occur in the realm of education (Nugraha, 2022). In the Independent Curriculum, teachers play a crucial role as facilitators, encouraging students to explore knowledge independently and creatively. Beyond conveying subject matter, teachers foster innovation, exploration, and active student participation. They contribute to creating a supportive classroom environment that promotes independence and motivates learning. Teacher evaluation goes beyond grades, focusing on a profound understanding of each student's abilities. Additionally, teachers contribute to formulating personalized learning strategies that adapt to individual needs and student development dynamics. Overall, the teacher's role in the Independent Curriculum involves empowering students and crafting learning experiences that remain relevant in evolving times.

In this study, the focus is on introducing the Independent Curriculum at Takwa Belitang Integrated Vocational School. The school recently decided to implement the Independent Curriculum starting in 2023 for tenth-grade students, while students in higher grades continue to follow the 2013 Curriculum. The research aims to assess the extent to which the Independent Curriculum has been implemented across various subjects in the school. Additionally, the study evaluates whether the teaching modules used align with the specified phases. By studying its implementation, the research provides valuable insights into how well it meets the educational goals of fostering independence and critical thinking among students. From the statement above the writer interested in conducting a research entitled “The Implementation of “Independent Curriculum” at Tenth Grade Student of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang”.

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. According to Moleong (2014), the descriptive method is a method used to describe or analyze research results but is not used to draw broad conclusions. Object of this research is the implementation of an Independent Curriculum at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang. This research examines the extent to which the Independent Curriculum was implemented in various subjects in the school and evaluates whether the teaching modules used align with the specified phases, as well as improving the quality of learning by introducing a more active, interactive, and integrated cross-disciplinary approach.

The data analysis process begins by first sorting all the data that has been obtained, such as from interviews, observations and documentation. The data analysis technique used in this research uses the following steps:

- a) Data collection is an integral part of data analysis activities. Data collection activities in this research were by using documentation studies and interviews related to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang.
- b) Data reduction is an activity that begins with summarizing and separating the important and necessary things. In this case, after the writer carried out data collection related to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang.
- c) Display data is a group of information that is arranged, then conclusions are drawn up and action is taken. The presentation of qualitative data is presented in narrative text form. Presentation can be in the form of matrices, diagrams, tables and charts. The resulting conclusions later provide explanations and conclusions on the research problems studied by the writer.
- d) Drawing conclusions is done by finding the meaning that has been presented. From the data that has been collected, conclusions are then drawn and these conclusions are verified and tested for validity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The writer presents an interpretation and discussion regarding the implementation of Independent Curriculum at tenth grade students of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang, namely Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in English Subjects at tenth grade of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang. Based on the guidelines for the stages of implementing the Independent Curriculum in educational units issued by the BSKAP Ministry of Education and Culture, in implementing the curriculum there is planning, implementation and assessment. From the results of interviews and observations, it can be seen regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at tenth grade students' of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang, namely:

a. Planning

The planning stage in the Independent Curriculum is in the form of teacher preparation in preparing the learning process including learning structures and components, learning strategies, and material adjustments. Then the results of the interview with the tenth grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang regarding the structure and components of learning, namely:

“The structure and main components of the independent curriculum for the subjects are actually the levels of the component structure that are graded from pre-school, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school or high school. Since we teach in high school but usually the same, for the structure of the components there are intracurricular, curricular, and extracurricular. But if for the overall structure, there are intracurriculars such as religious values, ethics, student identity, then there are P5 projects that are often carried out because of that, then we also pay attention to the time allocation. As for the components themselves, the first is from the learning then the second is from the learning strategy, then the methods and learning techniques.” Based on the results of the interview above, the tenth grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang explained that overall, the component structure consists of intracurricular, co-curricular, extracurricular religious values and manners, student identity, and P5 projects. Then for the components themselves, namely implementation, strategies, methods, and learning techniques.

The results of the interview regarding the learning strategy are: *“The learning strategies that were used to ensure the material was well understood by students included problem-based learning and project-based learning. The teaching methods used were effective in facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills by students. For example, information was presented and activities were designed to help facilitate learners or students in achieving their expected goals.”* Based on strategy that has been explained, tenth grade English teacher of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang that is facilitate acquisition knowledge and skills student through presentation designed information and activities for help makes it easier participant educate or student in reach the goal in accordance like what to expect. Additionally, for reach objective this is also done adjustment material in accordance with phase development student.

Following results interview about adjustment material the: *“For adapt material learning Language English to suit with development different students that is adapt level like vocational school level in phase E as well map in accordance need student such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Meanwhile that becomes consideration main in select and arrange material learning for every phase that is, the clear one character participant educate that's the first one. Then form activity his learning how, context place learning, the learning strategy chosen that what then tool evaluation results study”* Based on results interview above, the teacher adjusts level like vocational school level in phase E as well map in accordance need student such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic while that which becomes consideration main in select and arrange material learning for every phase that is based on character participant educate. Apart from that, teachers also use result data Study student for adapt material and methods teaching.

Interview result related utilization of this data that is: *“To utilize data, the teacher use data on student learning outcomes to adjust teaching materials and models. The data is usually in the form of achievements and learning outcomes as well as developments such as student motivation, discipline, then student learning difficulties. The teacher use the attitude towards learning from this data as a benchmark in preparing the next material. Regarding the specific system or tool, it can be a questionnaire or questionnaire, it can be in the form of observations that the researcher make every time the lesson takes place and also through interviews.”* Based on results interview above, tenth grade English teacher of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang utilize the results data Study student for adapt teaching materials and models. The data form achievements and results Study as well as development like motivation students, discipline, then difficulties - difficulties study student.

b. Application

The implementation stage of the Independent Curriculum includes the application of learning that gives students the freedom to increase their potential in accordance with the student's learning readiness, interests and learning profile. Currently, tenth grade English teacher used differentiated learning. The results of the interview are: *“Differentiated learning itself is learning that provides flexibility for students to increase their potential according to their own learning readiness, interests, and learning profiles. By implementing differentiated learning in the classroom, it aims to meet the needs of different students at different phases, namely by knowing students' learning readiness, then students' interests and students' learning profiles so that they can apply variations such as content, process and product when learning takes place both for the differentiation that has been applied, namely the three because the teacher have implemented or provided learning in which there are three differentiations both content, process and product and the results are in accordance with the learning objectives because they have been adjusted to the interests and needs of students beforehand.”*

Based on the results of the interview, the tenth grade English teacher of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang applied differentiated learning by assessing students' learning readiness, interests, and learning profiles. This

allowed them to implement variations in content, process, and product effectively during the learning process. In addition to implementing differentiated learning, the tenth grade English teacher also utilized technology and digital learning resources to support their teaching.

“The most effective media and learning resources to use in delivering material in phase E by utilizing books, models or digital media. IT that is currently booming is being used or called digital learning resources in the form of videos, animations, presentations and several interactive applications. Here the teacher utilize technology and digital learning resources, for example, the use of a projector when the teacher teach, then teachers are also helped a lot by the use of platforms and the use of several applications such as quizzes, kahoot and this using IT. So that we utilize technological advances as stated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, we must adjust the nature of nature and the nature of the times. The current era is already using IT technology, so we should not utilize technological advances in learning.”

From the results of the interview above, digital learning resources are used in the form of videos, animations, presentations and several interactive applications. Then the tenth grade English teacher of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belintang also uses technology in the form of a projector when teaching. In addition to utilizing the use of media and learning resources, the tenth grade English teacher of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belintang also describe learning activities or activities that are used to help students understand the material better according to their phase as the results of the interview below:

“The learning activities that are used to help students understand the material better are, firstly, mapping or dividing groups according to learning needs and with project-based learning. Then if asked to organize group activities or projects to accommodate differences in student ability levels, it can again use learning differentiation which provides variations in content, process and product to meet the needs of the students themselves.”

Based on the results of the interview, the learning activities used the tenth grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belintang included dividing students into groups according to their learning needs and employing project-based learning. Additionally, they utilized differentiated learning, which provided variations in content, process, and product to meet the individual needs of the students. However, throughout all stages of the implementation, the tenth-grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belintang also collaborated with and involved the students' parents. The interview results regarding this collaboration and parental involvement that were:

“The teacher involve parents in the learning process to support students' learning so far, which is really active through the WhatsApp group. However, there is also a special schedule for inviting parents to committee meetings, for example, for special programs or communication with parents regarding student learning progress, which is actively carried out by almost every subject teacher, especially for homeroom teachers, it is usually through the WhatsApp group. As a forum for communicating student learning achievements or obstacles. But specifically for those who experience problems in this school, a special call is made to parents to come to school to discuss further about the problems or obstacles experienced by students.”

From the the interview above, the tenth-grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belintang actively communicated with parents or guardians regarding students' learning progress and conveyed students' achievements or learning obstacles.

c. Evaluation

The evaluation stage includes the assessment process carried out by the teacher based on what has been stipulated in the Independent Curriculum, the following are the results of the interview evaluating effectiveness in teaching: *“Evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and making adjustments if necessary the teacher usually do by means of interviews or surveys can also be a test, can be an analysis of teaching materials. When asked whether or not the teacher have ever changed the teaching approach because to adjust to the needs of students, once on one English material the teacher initially used a constructive approach that focused on myself through exploration, discussion, reflection, but in the middle of learning the teacher felt that this approach was not effective because students might not be confident because they were asked to be independent. Then the teacher changed the approach to a collaborative approach with cooperation between students. It turns out that this makes them enthusiastic and brave because maybe working in a team makes them maybe less confident if they are alone so the teacher start with collaboration first and then ask representatives from them to convey or become group or team leaders. From there, it awakens their leadership spirit to dare to appear in front so the teacher once changed the approach during learning because the teacher felt it was less effective.”*

Based on the results of the interview above, the evaluation carried out by the tenth grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belintang was a survey in the form of a test or analysis of teaching material. Sometimes, during the learning process, the teacher felt that the approach was not effective enough because students lacked confidence when asked to learn independently. Therefore, the teacher changed the approach to a collaborative one, fostering cooperation between students, which made them more enthusiastic and confident. Additionally, teachers

used formative assessments to monitor and adjust learning according to students' needs. The following were the results of interviews related to formative assessment: *“The use of formative assessment to monitor and adjust learning with assessment tools or methods aimed at monitoring the learning progress of students during the learning process, takes place then to provide feedback for the learning program and to find out what weaknesses require improvement for the tools or assessments used and to measure understanding periodically. Actually, there are so many that can be used with simple things such as discussions, oral tests, can also be with presentations here we can understand or know the extent of understanding and then can be with reflection.”*

From the results of the interview above, the use of formative evaluation aimed to monitor and adjust learning with tools or evaluation methods to track students' progress during the learning process. Additionally, the teacher provided reinforcement for students who had mastered the material and remedial support for those who were still struggling. The results of the interview were as follows:

“Providing reinforcement for students who have mastered the material can be done verbally in the form of words such as praise sentences, it can also be in the form of awards or advice and also encouragement. As for how to provide remedial, namely by giving assignments with discussions, questions and answers or also with group work. Strategies to help students who have difficulty following the material in this phase by repeating the material that has been taught then it can be by giving assignments so that students study the material they don't understand then we can also provide source books that are studied by the students themselves.”

From the interview results above, the teacher gave appreciation and reinforcement for students who mastered the material. For students who had difficulties, remedial measures were taken by giving tasks that involved discussion, question and answer sessions, or group work. Furthermore, the teacher also provided constructive feedback to students to help them improve and enhance their understanding based on the interview below:

“The way to give constructive feedback to students so that they can improve and enhance their understanding is through encouragement, sincere praise, and this is focused on the strength of their understanding in learning. The teacher give feedback after every lesson, usually after the lesson ends. The teacher usually ask for feedback from the students that the teacher teach in that class, it can be verbal with praise. This is two-way feedback, it can be teacher to student, it can be student to teacher, so it can be in two forms. There is a verbal form with words of praise, motivation, and health and encouragement. And non-verbal can be in a very simple way, in a very simple way, by giving a thumbs up. That's already encouraging to the students.”

The results of the interview regarding feedback aimed to improve and enhance students' understanding. Additionally, the teacher always provided feedback at the end of each lesson. There were two forms of feedback: verbal and nonverbal.

Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Independent Curriculum at tenth grade students' of SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang

Challenges were an inseparable part of any educational program or activity. This was also true for the challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum for tenth grade English at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang. The results of the interview regarding the challenges and their solutions were as follows: *“Challenges and solutions were some challenges or obstacles faced by teachers. For example, unpreparedness in teaching meant that the teacher personally had to prepare both the teaching module, the media to be used, and the material to be delivered beforehand. Challenges from students included diverse behaviors such as reduced concentration, lack of discipline, less enthusiasm, and decreased learning motivation. Additionally, there were challenges due to limited resources or inadequate infrastructure. The solution to overcoming challenges from teachers was to anticipate and prevent them. Teachers or colleagues teaching the same subjects collaborated in a community of practitioners, preparing teaching tools and exchanging ideas to prepare the teaching media and materials to be delivered. To overcome obstacles from students, such as decreased motivation, a comfortable learning environment was created to increase students' concentration and motivation. For limited resources and inadequate infrastructure, available resources were utilized in learning.”*

The results of the interview above revealed the challenges faced by both teachers and students in the implementation of tenth grade English subjects at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang. Challenges for teachers included unpreparedness in teaching. The solution to this was to ensure that teaching modules and media were prepared in advance and that the material to be delivered was well-prepared. Challenges for students included reduced concentration, lack of discipline, decreased enthusiasm, and diminished learning motivation. Additionally, some challenges stemmed from limited resources or inadequate infrastructure. The solution to these challenges was to create a comfortable learning environment, as it significantly influenced and improved students' concentration and motivation.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum for tenth grade English subjects at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang, the writer concluded that the Independent Curriculum had been implemented effectively in the class, along with appropriate learning strategies. This facilitated the acquisition of knowledge and skills by presenting information and conducting planned activities that helped students reach their goals as expected. Teachers also used student data to adapt teaching materials and models. The implementation stage of the Independent Curriculum involved applying learning methods that allowed students to develop their potential in accordance with their learning readiness, interests, and learning profiles.

At that time, the tenth-grade English teacher at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang used differentiated learning. In addition to implementing differentiated learning, the teacher also utilized technology and digital learning resources to support learning. The tenth-grade English teachers at SMK Terpadu Takwa Belitang were also active in communicating with parents or guardians regarding students' learning progress and conveying students' achievements or obstacles. During the evaluation stage, the teachers conducted surveys in the form of tests or analysis of teaching materials. Additionally, they used formative assessments to monitor and adjust learning according to student needs. Furthermore, the teacher provided reinforcement for students who had mastered the material and offered remedial support for those who were still having difficulties, through assignments, discussions, question and answer sessions, or group work.

In implementing the Independent Curriculum, there were challenges from both teachers and students. The challenge for teachers was unpreparedness in teaching, so the solution was to ensure that teaching modules and media were prepared in advance, and that the material to be delivered was ready. Additionally, challenges from students included reduced concentration, lack of discipline, decreased enthusiasm, and diminished learning motivation, with some issues arising from limited resources or inadequate infrastructure. The solution to these challenges was to create a comfortable learning environment, as it significantly influenced and could increase student concentration and motivation to learn.

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