INDEPENDENCE CURRICULUM IN PRACTICE: EXAMINING LEARNING MODELS DEPLOYED BY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines learning models applied in learning activities used by teachers in the implementation of the independent curriculum. In this research, a qualitative descriptive method was used. The data were collected through interviews and participant observation in natural classroom settings. This study found that teachers observed in classes with the independent curriculum tended to apply learning models that supported students' creativity and improved their critical thinking skills. There are four learning models that teachers tend to implement, namely Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-based Learning (PJBL), Discovery Learning (DL), and Inquiry Learning (IL). These four models can foster 4C skills, namely collaborative, creative, critical thinking or critical thinking, and also communication or building good multi-directional communication in the learning process. This research implies that teachers must be able to choose the right learning model in learning so that students can improve their competence.

Keywords: Teachers, Independence Curriculum, School

INTRODUCTION

A curriculum is an essential and mandatory element in educational institutions. The curriculum has an essential role in learning tools that plan learning activities in acquiring knowledge and experience through a series of learning activities. The curriculum can also be interpreted as a process that includes determining learning objectives based on several aspects such as needs, selection of learning materials and methods, development of learning materials and activities, and evaluation of learning outcomes designed by considering the development of student characteristics. The design of this curriculum contains rules in planning learning related to objectives, content, materials, or learning materials, as well as how to apply them so that the objectives of this curriculum are classified

as very important in achieving curriculum objectives (Maba & Mantra, 2018).

An independent curriculum is a way of responding to educational challenges due to the post-endemic educational crisis. The independent curriculum, born to overcome educational problems (Munte, 2022), formulated several new policies that conceptually provide freedom for institutions and students to implement the learning process. Through this curriculum change, it is hoped that there will be changes in the world of education that focus more on developing character and soft skills based on competency. The concept of independence in the independent curriculum focuses on free learning so that students can learn independently and creatively. This freedom encourages students to explore their knowledge to create an independent character. This freedom to learn was born

because many problems occur in the world of education, but it focuses more on human resources (Wanti & Chastanti, 2023).

The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum developed by the Indonesian government to improve the quality of education in this country. This curriculum's learning methods are active, creative, and fun for students. This helps students to understand the material being taught more efficiently and increases their interest in learning (Maba et al., 2023). The Independent Curriculum is based on an educational philosophy prioritizing developing student competencies. This curriculum aims to improve the quality of education in Indonesia and increase student competence in science, technology, arts, and sports. Competencies developed in this curriculum include intellectual competence, social competence, and emotional competence (Maba et al., 2023).

The Independent Curriculum has been implemented in schools throughout Indonesia. However, several obstacles still need to be addressed in the implementation process, such as a lack of support from the government and a lack of teacher willingness to change their learning methods. However, with the right solutions and sufficient support, the Independent curriculum can be implemented successfully (Syamsiar et al., 2023). The Independent Curriculum is designed to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. With active, creative, and fun learning methods, students will more easily understand the material being taught and increase their interest in learning. However, implementing this curriculum still faces several obstacles that must be overcome. However, the curriculum can be implemented successfully with sufficient support and the right solutions (Wanti & Chastanti, 2023).

The central concept of independent learning is freedom of thinking, which means that teachers can independently translate the curriculum before it is explained to students so that teachers can

answer each question. Students' needs during the learning process (Mantra, 2021). In carrying out the learning process for students, teachers must be able to adapt learning strategies, models, and methods based on the characteristics of the students. Teachers can no longer teach with conventional, standard, or mediocre learning strategies. Teachers must innovate by enriching and updating knowledge and skills to present exciting and interactive learning activities using technology (Widiastuti et al., 2021).

Students must be active and independent in forming 4C skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Some aspects that are considered necessary, such as instructional should be student-centred, educational should be collaborative (Education that makes students collaborate, learning can show students, and schools can be integrated with society needs to be developed in learning in the 21st century today where freedom of learning also involves conditions of freedom in fulfilling the goals, methods, materials, and evaluation of learning both teachers as well as students (Maba, Widiastuti, et al., 2023).

From this, the learning process in the independent learning curriculum is more directed towards student needs, whereas previously, the concept of learning was still centred on teachers or educators. Learning is providing students with learning according to their needs and desires (Handayani & Mantra, 2022). Learning is the core activity in the educational process because it is this process that determines whether or not the learning objectives are achieved. Changes in student behaviour, including cognitive, psychomotor, or affective, mark achievement in teaching and learning. Apart from that, learning also aims to influence students' feelings intellectual and spiritual abilities to learn. Learning built by a teacher will increase each student's potential and various abilities, such as the ability to think, have creativity, reconstruct

knowledge, solve problems, and so on, as a reference for the abilities that students need today (Mantra et al., 2022).

On that basis, the learning model used in the Independent Curriculum is an essential component to be applied to students. An effective learning model helps the learning process, so learning goals will be more easily achieved because the form of learning will be reflected from the beginning to the end of the activities presented or packaged by the teacher. In other words, a learning model is a container or package for applying a learning approach, method, and technique. Using appropriate learning models is one of the determinants of success in learning activities carried out by teachers. Thus, teachers can choose the appropriate types of learning models to achieve the expected learning objectives (Widiastuti et al., 2022).

The Independent Curriculum was developed as a more adaptive curriculum framework as part of a learning reform initiative, focusing on important material and the development of student character and skills. Based on the description above regarding the importance of effective learning and learning models under the applicable curriculum, research was carried out to reveal the learning models used by teachers in the learning process based on the independent curriculum.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, a qualitative descriptive method was used. Qualitative methods are included in artistic methods, where the research process is less patterned, and included in interpretative methods, where data results are related to the interpretation of data collection in the field (Cohen et al., 2018). Collecting data for data in qualitative research does not involve statistics or measurement using other quantitative methods (Ary et al., 2018). The focus of this research is on habits regarding learning management and focuses on the learning process in the independent curriculum. Researchers are directly involved in research, researchers as interviewers, and participant observation to obtain data. Data was collected by conducting observations, interviews, and face-to-face documentation both online and offline. To analyse data by reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of interviews with teachers about the independent curriculum, the interview summary can be represented as follows:

Table 1. The excerpts of the interviews related to the learning models in Independence Curriculum

Teacher A	"I was given independence and freedom in designing, learning, implementing, and assessing it. I can innovate in implementing learning, and students can understand the material without being pressed for time.
Teacher B	"I can apply various learning models that increase student activity, such as problem-based learning (PBL), project-based Learning (PJBL), discovery learning (DL), and inquiry learning (IL). "With this independent curriculum, a generation of intelligence and character will be formed."
Teacher C	"In the past, when teaching was monotonous, the only benchmark was in books. "Now, with the implementation of the independent curriculum, it turns out that good learning is under students' needs, and teaching materials are taken from various sources. I make teaching materials more meaningful with learning methods that challenge students to be active and creative."
Teacher	"This Independent Curriculum is

| D | excellent to implement because it allows teachers to be creative independently in designing learning by applying learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project Based Learning (PJBL), Discovery Learning (DL), and Inquiry Learning (IL)." |
| Teacher E | "Several learning models that can be applied to learning with the independent curriculum are problem-based learning (PBL), project-based Learning (PJBL), discovery learning (DL), and inquiry learning (IL). This learning models are very suitable for this millennium era." |

In accordance with the results of the interview above, this research continues with classroom observations. This research found that teachers observed in classes with the independent curriculum tended to apply learning models that supported students' creativity and improved their critical thinking skills. There are four learning models that teachers tend to implement, namely Problem-Based Learning (PBL), project-based learning (PJBL), Discovery Learning (DL), and Inquiry Learning (IL). These four models can foster 4C skills, namely collaborative, creative, critical thinking, and communication or building good multi-directional communication in the learning process.

Discussion

Based on the data above found that teachers who adopted an independent curriculum tended to apply learning models that were able to improve students' critical thinking skills and student creativity, such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PJBL), Discovery Learning (DL), and Inquiry Learning (IL). Below, we will briefly discuss the four learning models.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a learning model that prioritizes how active students are in always thinking critically and always being skilled when solving a problem. The process of how students learn depends on how complex the problems they face are. This method directs students to gain new knowledge, using analysis of various knowledge and learning experiences they have. After that, the teachers gave the students the learning problems. In essence, problem-based learning was developed to provide learning experiences to students. A learning process that prioritizes students' ability to analyse learning material independently. Using real problems to face, students can learn to think critically. Then, develop problem-solving skills and gain knowledge independently.

PBL is a learning model that can stimulate students to learn through various real problems in everyday life. The steps in PBL are identifying the problem, preparing a plan to solve the problem, students gathering information, solving the problem together, and processing the information to conclude. The basis of this problem-based learning method is problems in the real world, while students certainly need to gain all the experience in dealing with unexpected conditions. Because of this, problem-based learning has several specific targets to achieve. The objectives of implementing this program on the quality of students are as follows. To improve students' critical thinking skills in choosing and deciding something. Provide training in solving problems systematically maturely, and plan for positive results. Problem-based learning is used to help students correctly understand the role of adults in life. There is encouragement for students to become independent and responsible individuals.

Problem-based learning is used in learning systems because it has the advantage of being able to help students discover how to understand learning itself. However, this does not mean that this

system does not have disadvantages. Here are the advantages and disadvantages of each problem-based learning system. The advantages of problem-based learning include: (1) Students are trained to be able always to use their minds to be critical and skilled in solving a problem, (2) To be able to trigger increased activity from students in the classroom, by learning while practicing, (3) The existence of this learning system makes students accustomed to learning but using relevant sources, (4) A more conducive and effective learning activity, this arises because students are required to be active.

Even though it is a reliable learning method, it also has disadvantages, including (1) not all learning materials can apply this system, (2) it takes much time to complete the learning material, quite a long time and not a short time, (3) for students who are not or are not used to analysing a problem, because not all of them have the desire to do it, (4) Teachers will find it difficult to condition the assignment, this arises if the number of students in the class is too large.

Project Based Learning (PJBL)
Project-based Learning is a learning model that uses projects or activities as media. Students explore, assess, interpret, synthesize, and provide information to produce various learning outcomes. Project Based Learning is a method that uses problems to collect and integrate new knowledge based on experience in actual activities.

Project-based learning is a comprehensive teaching approach that engages students in cooperative and ongoing inquiry activities. Project Based Learning is designed for complex problems requiring students to investigate and understand them. Considering that each student has a different learning style, project-based learning provides students with the opportunity to explore material using various methods that are meaningful

to them and carry out experiments collaboratively.

Project-based learning is an in-depth investigation of a real-world topic, which is valuable for students' attention and effort. Project-based learning is a comprehensive teaching approach that engages students in cooperative and ongoing inquiry activities. This project-based learning examines the relationship between theoretical information and practice. It motivates students to reflect on what they learn in an actual project and can improve their scientific performance.

The advantages or disadvantages of project-based learning will not be an obstacle for students who carry it out because this all depends on the role of the teacher who will help facilitate the learning. The teacher's role in implementing project-based learning includes Planning and designing learning. Create learning strategies. Imagine the interactions that will occur between teachers and students. Look for student uniqueness. Assess students in a transparent manner and with various types of assessments. Create a portfolio of student work.

Discovery Learning (DL)
Discovery Learning is a learning model that allows students to learn through exploration and observation of the surrounding environment. The steps in DL are observation, identifying a problem or question, formulating a hypothesis or alleged answer, and carrying out further experiments or observations to prove the hypothesis.

Discovery learning is a learning model that emphasizes actively and independently understanding a concept from the material to obtain conclusions. In this learning model, students are expected to be more active in learning activities while the teacher is a facilitator. The teacher only asks students several questions related to the material. Then, students are tasked with finding, investigating, and concluding the

results of their observations as capital to answer questions from the teacher.

The objectives of the Discovery Learning Model include (1) Providing opportunities for students to be actively involved in the learning process, (2) Teaching students to find patterns in concrete and abstract situations, including predicting (extrapolating) additional information provided, (3) Providing opportunity for students to learn to formulate unambiguous question and answer strategies and use question and answer as a tool to obtain valuable information in discovering knowledge, (4) Help students carry out practical collaborative activities, share information, and hear and apply ideas others.

The Discovery Learning model encourages students to be active in making hypotheses, conducting experiments, analysing data, and making conclusions so that students' enthusiasm in the learning process increases and can improve cognitive learning outcomes. The students themselves greatly influence the success of a learning process because they are an essential component in the learning system at school, so students are the subjects of the learning process and activities. Learning must be an activity that focuses on students; therefore, an effective and efficient learning system considers students' characteristics.

Inquiry Learning (IL)

Inquiry Learning is a learning model that allows students to learn through scientific investigation of a natural or social phenomenon. The steps of Inquiry Learning are formulating research questions, planning research, conducting research, analysing data, and presenting research results.

The inquiry learning model is a learning activity that facilitates students to ask questions and carry out investigations or searches, experiments, or research independently to gain the knowledge they need. In this model, students are directed to be able to find out for themselves the

material presented in the lesson by asking questions and investigating independently.

Inquiry learning is a learning model that encourages students to ask questions and draw conclusions from general principles based on experience and practical activities. This means that this learning requires students to search for and find the necessary knowledge through questions, asking for information, or investigating. Inquiry Learning is learning that occurs as a result of students' activities in manipulating, structuring, and transforming information in such a way that they discover new information. Bell prefers to explain what happens behind the questions, investigations, or inquiries students make in inquiry learning.

CONCLUSION

This research found that teachers in classes with an independent curriculum tend to apply learning models that support students' creativity and improve their critical thinking abilities. There are four learning models that teachers tend to implement, namely problem-based learning (PBL), project-based Learning (PJBL), discovery learning (DL), and inquiry learning (IL). These four models can foster 4C skills, namely collaborative, creative, critical thinking, and communication or building good multi-directional communication in the learning process. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers increase the application of learning models that can improve students' abilities regarding the 4C skills, namely collaborative, creative, critical thinking, and communication.

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