Examining the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in English Language Material at Vocational High Schools

Purwo Haryono

1 Universitas Widya Dharma Klaten, Klaten, Indonesia; pwharyonojournal@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Independent Learning Curriculum;
English Difficulty;
Teacher Barriers

Article history:
Received 2023-07-18
Revised 2023-11-24
Accepted 2024-03-18

ABSTRACT

The teacher's task in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is to prepare learning plans, materials, and methods, and assess them. However, out of 50 students, there were 32 people whose mean score was below the standard of 75, namely 28.30. Another point, 40% cannot complete the English material test. It is urgent to research because there are gaps in theory, expectations, and reality in the field to find out the results of the analysis of obstacles and difficulties in implementing the independent learning curriculum on English language material. Mixed methods research method. The subjects were 120 vocational high school students. Data collection techniques use surveys and interviews. Instruments are arranged based on indicators. Instruments are shared via a Google Form link. Interviews were conducted to strengthen the survey results. The analysis technique uses SPSS version 26.0. Interview data was analyzed by collecting data, reducing, and drawing conclusions. The results showed that 39.17% of teachers had prepared learning plans, only 31.68% were able to deliver the material, only 44.12% were able to assess, only 39.17% of students experienced changes in behavior and 49.18% evaluated the English curriculum material. Freedom to learn.

Consistent with the interview data, the survey confirms that instructors are still struggling to put the curriculum into practice. Many of those who took the survey are looking forward to receiving instruction on how to use the Merdeka curriculum to teach English, as well as how to evaluate and assess previously taught courses.

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA license.

Corresponding Author:
Purwo Haryono
Universitas Widya Dharma Klaten, Klaten, Indonesia; pwharyonojournal@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' difficulties when implementing the curriculum are generally due to obstacles that cause difficulties in managing the implementation process. Teachers' obstacles and difficulties in designing learning methods, models, and strategies have a negative impact on the implementation of the learning process (Susanto et al., 2022; Rubaii & Bandeira, 2018; Efriana, 2021). Obstacles are a state of inability of a person to do, carry out, work on, complete, and explain the material being taught (Suryaman et al., 2020; Michel et al., 2021; Jan, 2020). At the high school level is a period when teachers must try to prevent students from obstacles, both psychologically and physically (Zhu et al., 2022). To achieve this, teacher constraints generally often occur when implementing material that is difficult to design (Langford et al.,

http://journal.staihubbulwathan.id/index.php/alishlah
2021). Whereas in the world of education, teachers play an important role in designing material objectives derived from the curriculum (Shim & Lee, 2020). Under current conditions, the independent learning curriculum has been implemented in schools. The independent curriculum approach expects teachers to have good skills in the field being taught, and this aims to make the learning process run effectively and efficiently (Bahri, 2023; Ujang Cepi Barliain1, Siti Solekah2, 2022). Before implementing the material to be taught, the teacher prepares a learning implementation plan, materials, and learning models in advance (Elfeky et al., 2020).

The success of implementing the independent learning curriculum can be measured from several indicators (Anas et al., 2023). The first indicator is the learning plan. The teacher’s obligation to design so that the learning process runs effectively with other expectations is that the teacher has determined the materials, methods, time duration, assessment, and form of evaluation. The second indicator is teaching ability. Student success is the teacher’s success in delivering the material. All teachers who are competent in their field can use various models, methods, and learning strategies. The independent curriculum recommends 3 educational models that can be applied, namely the blended learning model, flipped classroom, and project-based learning model. Apart from the teacher’s ability to use methods and media in teaching, teachers are also expected to have the ability to increase student learning motivation. The third indicator is assessing students. The way teachers deliver learning materials and media as well as the teaching methods used influence students’ understanding. With the success rate, teachers can carry out assessments and analyze the reasons why students cannot achieve learning goals, whether because of inappropriate teaching methods, ineffective classes, material that is too difficult, or something else. The fourth indicator is changes in student behavior. Good student behavior and character show that the teacher has succeeded in instilling good values. This can be seen in students who were initially inactive becoming active, more disciplined, and responsible and respecting other people’s opinions. The fifth indicator is the evaluation of the material taught. This indicator can be measured from the progress of the previous learning process. The five indicators of teacher success above articulate the duties and obligations of teachers in implementing an independent learning curriculum that aims to equal student participation, effective learning, and not ignoring students in the subjects taught (Jufriadi et al., 2022; Ihsan, 2022).

Hansson et al. (2021) assert that the teacher carefully plans and guides students’ learning process, aiming to foster their development and maturity. According to Sanusi et al. (2022), in the independent learning curriculum, teachers are expected to develop the skills and abilities necessary for students to carry out their duties and responsibilities independently as they mature. According to Jovanović et al. (2021), a key measure of a teacher’s effectiveness in managing learning is whether the average student learning outcomes exceed the predetermined minimum standards. According to the findings of Rusmini et al. (2021), the results of their observations indicate that student learning outcomes in certain subjects are quite low. The data shows that the average score achieved is 62.45, with 40% of students failing to meet the minimum completeness requirement of 75. Effective teaching practices are closely linked to student learning outcomes. This includes careful planning, selecting relevant materials, and tailoring instruction to meet the needs of individual students. Given the need to incorporate a wide range of independent learning approaches, it is crucial to consider and apply various models when designing and implementing subjects. If teachers struggle to implement the new curriculum, it can have a detrimental effect on teaching progress and student behaviour. Based on the data collected, it was found that a significant percentage of students (62%) expressed their disagreement with the professional competence of teachers while implementing the self-learning curriculum model (Suyono et al., 2021; Haryono, 2021).

The results of previous research show that there is a gap between theory, expectations, and reality in the field. The theory says that good planning by teachers in the curriculum will have a negative impact. However, the fact is that the expectations and reality of student learning outcomes and understanding have decreased. So it is urgent to research the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in high schools as measured by five indicators of teacher success in implementing the independent learning curriculum.
The research aims to analyze the management process of implementing the free learning curriculum in high school and find out where the obstacles and difficulties are for teachers in developing and implementing methods, and assessing and evaluating the implementation of the free learning curriculum for high school students.

2. METHODS

The research method used a mixed method (Strijker et al., 2020). This mixed method is a combination of quantitative and qualitative descriptive research proposed by McCrudden et al. (2021), which shows that mixed methods research is a solution in producing descriptive data that is more accurate and can be calculated and interpreted in sentence form. The research subject is a vocational high school in Klaten Regency. The research objects were 120 people, 90 vocational high school students, and 30 teachers who were directly involved in implementing the English language material in the independent learning curriculum.

There are two types of data collection techniques included in this study, namely obtained with primary data and secondary data Yanto & Siga, (2023), Wielki, (2020), namely: Data was obtained using surveys and interviews. Survey data was obtained by distributing instruments to all 120 respondents. The instrument is distributed via the Google link. The research instrument is structured based on indicators of success and indicators that are the teacher's responsibility in implementing the independent learning curriculum in vocational high schools. The data obtained from the survey results is the basis for preparing questions in interviews to confirm and strengthen the findings in the survey. Interview data was obtained by conducting interview sessions with 30 teachers. Survey data and interview data are aligned and analyzed to find intersecting data.

Table 1. Indicators of Successful Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop a learning implementation plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teaching Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Judgment Ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Changes in the Behavior of Learners being taught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conduct Evaluation Process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 is a research indicator and is a benchmark for teachers' success in implementing the independent learning curriculum. The indicators above are analyzed to determine teachers' obstacles and difficulties before and after the learning is implemented.

Survey results were analysed using SPSS version 26.0 as part of the data analysis procedure (Zachary et al., 2020; Roitblat et al., 2020). The survey data was analyzed in stages for each research indicator and a bar chart to illustrate the data findings. The results of the survey data analysis were interpreted and became the basis for conducting interview sessions. Interview data was analyzed in stages, and data was collected and presented within the period specified in data collection. At the initial stage of the research, the researcher carried out a general examination of the social situation/object being studied, and everything that was seen and heard in this research was recorded and recorded. In this way, researchers get a lot of varied data. Data is collected at different times of the day. After the data was collected, the research carried out data reduction. This data is summarized, selected, and sorted into main points related to indicators for implementing the independent learning curriculum. All unrelated data was discarded and related words were grouped and coded. From the reduced data, conclusions are drawn. The conclusions from the interview data were then aligned with the survey data and became the final stage in drawing research conclusions.
3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Findings

The following are the results of research and evaluation of preparation and learning processes in implementing the independent learning curriculum in vocational high schools on English language material. The survey results show that several indicators that are the teacher’s responsibility have been implemented, but the findings show that there are still indicators that are obstacles and indicators of teachers’ difficulties in implementing the independent learning curriculum. The following is a bar diagram of the results of the findings of the resource person’s responses in assessing the implementation of the independent learning curriculum process:

![Figure 1](image1.png)

**Figure 1.** Results of Respondents’ Assessment of Develop a Learning Implementation Plan

The data above shows that respondents assess that some teachers have carried out their responsibilities in preparing English learning plans. However, the data shows that there are still 32.50% who do not agree that teachers have prepared learning implementation plans based on the independent learning curriculum. The data also shows that 28.33% of respondents strongly disagree that teachers have prepared learning implementation plans in vocational schools on English language material based on the independent learning curriculum. In total, 60.83% strongly disagree and disagree that teachers have carried out their responsibilities as expected.

![Figure 2](image2.png)

**Figure 2.** Results of Respondents’ Assessment of Teachers’ Teaching Ability in Free Learning

From the data seen in Figure 2, 26.66% of respondents felt that they strongly disagreed with the current ability of teachers to implement the independent learning curriculum in English material, 31.66% of respondents said they disagreed, 15% said they agreed, 11.66% and 15% agreed and strongly
agreed. By looking at the data in Figure 2, it is necessary to hone teacher skills and carry out training in implementing the independent learning curriculum, especially in English material. As many as 68.32% expect an increase in the quality of teaching by implementing the independent learning curriculum.

**Figure 3. Results of Respondents' Assessment of Assessment Ability**

By looking at the survey results in Figure 3, 25% of respondents strongly disagree with the teacher’s ability to assess the learning outcomes of English language material for students based on the Merdeka curriculum studying at vocational high schools, and 30.88% disagree. If a total of 55.88% of respondents disagree, then training needs to be held on how to assess the learning process in implementing the free learning curriculum on English language material.

**Figure 4. Results of Assessment of Indicators of Change in Student Behavior**

Figure 4 shows that the assessment of changes in student behavior taught by teachers is still not far from expectations. 28.33% strongly disagreed, and 32.50% disagreed. These findings show that there are still 60.83% whose abilities and skills need to be developed in changing student behavior from not wanting to learn to be willing to learn. Of all respondents, only 26.76% experienced changes in behavior during the learning process using the independent learning curriculum at vocational high schools.
Figure 5. Results of Respondents’ Evaluation of Learning Evaluation Process Indicators

Figure 5 shows that 21.66% of respondents strongly disagree and 29.16% disagree. If the number of respondents who disagree with the learning evaluation process carried out by teachers is 50.82%. These findings confirm that teachers, in evaluating the learning process must be provided with provisions before the process of implementing the independent learning curriculum is carried out. Schools must provide free training and facilitate teachers to take part in training to evaluate the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in vocational high schools on English language material.

Table 2. Interview Coding Results with Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Frequently Appearing Words</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop a learning implementation plan</td>
<td>12 people prepared lesson plans and 18 people did not prepare lesson plans</td>
<td>More teachers are hampered and have difficulties in preparing lesson plans, so it impacts the implementation of the independent learning curriculum. Teachers have difficulty choosing the right model and method for implementing spaced material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teaching Ability</td>
<td>Papa's obstacles in compiling material, the difficulty in choosing a model</td>
<td>Teachers need training in preparing assessments and how to assess the process of implementing the independent learning curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Judgment Ability</td>
<td>Lack of training in scoring methods</td>
<td>The process of implementing learning has not been able to attract students’ interest in learning to change their behavior to become interested in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Changes in the Behavior of Learners being taught</td>
<td>Weak interest in student learning</td>
<td>There are still more teachers who admit difficulties in evaluating the learning process based on the independent learning curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conduct Evaluation Process</td>
<td>8 people did the evaluation and 22 people did not do the evaluation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Discussion

Management of Independent Curriculum Learning Implementation Plans. From the results obtained in Figure 1, it can be seen that planning for learning English material is still lacking in the independent learning curriculum when implemented in vocational high schools. In Figure 1, it can be seen that 32.50% did not agree that teachers had prepared learning implementation plans when implementing material from the independent learning curriculum. This data does not stand alone, 28.33% of respondents strongly disagree that teachers have prepared learning implementation plans in
vocational high schools. These two data amount to 60.83%, which states that improvements must be made in planning and preparation before implementing the independent learning curriculum for vocational high school level teachers in English language material. Another finding from the interview results was that respondents stated that most of them did not prepare learning implementation plans, but used learning plans for the K13 curriculum, which has long been abandoned. Incorrect planning impacts the learning process and decreases student learning outcomes (Becker et al., 2020; Cankurtaran & Beverland, 2020; Sgarbossa et al., 2020). This has an impact on student achievement and expectations in understanding and obtaining better learning outcomes. These findings emphasize that teachers who teach in vocational high schools must be given training and knowledge about appropriate learning methods and models to be designed before implementing an independent learning curriculum on English language material. This finding has an impact on teachers' mastery of the material. From Figure 2, it can be seen that 68.32% expect an increase in the quality of teaching when implementing the independent learning curriculum. The root of the problem is a lack of training in planning and preparing materials, models, and methods before implementing the independent learning curriculum. These findings are in line with the research Cattaneo et al. (2020), Harder et al. (2020), and Reed (2020) that teachers must be provided with training and debriefing before the learning process is carried out.

Teachers' obstacles and difficulties in implementing the independent learning curriculum. From the survey, it can be seen that teachers' obstacles in implementing the independent learning curriculum stem from incomplete planning. Teachers use material in textbooks although teachers can arrange modules according to the students' abilities. Teachers also do not prepare assessment sheets so teachers have difficulty assessing the learning process and the absence of a test assessment rubric provided has an impact on unsystematic assessment of learning outcomes. Data shows that 60.83% expect teachers to prepare learning implementation plans at the beginning, 68.32% expect an increase in the quality of teaching in implementing the independent learning curriculum, 55.88% expect teacher training in how to assess the learning process in implementation. The independent learning curriculum still has minimal changes. 60.83% of students' learning behavior needs to develop abilities and skills in changing student behavior from not wanting to learn to being willing to learn. Teachers' difficulties in compiling material have a negative impact on students' understanding of English material (Kamil et al., 2020; Guntur & Setyaningrum, 2021). Based on Table 2 the results of teacher interviews show that teachers expect training in preparing learning implementation plans that are in accordance with the independent learning curriculum, teachers also hope that there will be special training on how to assess and how to assess material in the independent learning curriculum and in the interview results also say it is difficult to choose the right learning model for the students being taught. Difficulty in choosing a learning model has a negative impact on students' knowledge (Zhang et al., 2020; Haryono, 2021a).

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The research results show that evaluations are still rare. It can be seen from Figure 5 that 50.82% strongly disagree with the evaluation of the learning process based on the independent learning curriculum in vocational high schools. This data shows the weak ability and lack of teacher preparation in making corrections and evaluating the learning process. This finding hurts increasing students' understanding, knowledge, and value of learning outcomes in English material. During the interview, the teacher stated in his confession that he often encountered obstacles and difficulties when evaluating the teaching process. Sometimes, the model is right, but the way it is assessed is wrong. An inappropriate assessment process influences the child's development and psychology (Wullschleger et al., 2020). Sometimes the method is correct but the materials are not suitable for the model used. Teachers assess that the examples of evaluation models provided by the government are different from the school conditions taught in the field. The model used in learning in junior high schools is very different from the model used in vocational high schools. In vocational high schools, it is hoped that students will be able to develop English language material, even though in the field, students still need to be assisted in converging English language material. The material that must be prepared by the teacher must also be by the initial abilities of the students being taught, this is what often causes the initial learning process to not match the expectations.
and targets of the independent learning curriculum. In the evaluation, it is known that teachers need to prepare for the initial planning stages and need assistance in preparing plans, both material planning, models, assessment, and even the planning stage of the evaluation form. Because in this study, more respondents disagreed with the form of evaluation compared to respondents who agreed. A good and correct assessment and evaluation process will gradually increase student learning discipline (Eltanahy et al., 2020).

4. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that special attention needs to be paid to schools and teachers in preparing learning tools before implementing the independent learning curriculum. In implementing the independent learning curriculum, many difficulties are encountered because learning planning is not carried out quickly and completely. The findings show that the lack of planning in implementing the independent learning curriculum in English material in vocational high schools hurts students' understanding, knowledge, and learning outcomes. Teachers must prepare teaching materials in the form of complete modules with models, methods, and learning strategies recommended by the independent learning curriculum. The form and method of assessment do not yet exist, and it has not been implemented optimally up to the evaluation stage. Teachers also realize that difficulties in implementing the independent learning curriculum have an impact on students' understanding of the material taught in English. However, teachers also admit difficulties in assessing and evaluating the learning process according to the expectations of the independent learning curriculum. The advantage of this research is that it provides a complete and clear picture of the obstacles and difficulties teachers have in implementing the independent learning curriculum. This research implies that teachers should improve themselves by starting to compile teaching materials, prepare assessment sheets, and be equipped with clear assessment rubrics. Another implication is that teachers must undergo a lot of training to prepare models and methods for teaching materials in the independent learning curriculum. This research's fault lies in its failure to create teaching materials aligned with the independent learning curriculum. Recommendations for future study include offering module development instruction through an autonomous learning curriculum at the vocational high school level.

REFERENCES


Efriana, L. (2021). Problems Of Online Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic In Efl Classroom And The
Examining the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in English Language Material at Vocational High Schools

Purwo Haryono

Solution. Jelita: Journal Of English Language Teaching And Literature, 2(1), 2721–1916.

Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


Purwo Haryono


