

PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTING THE FREEDOM TO LEARN CURRICULUM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Education plays an important role in human life in improving the quality and standard of living of the community and raising awareness of practical and critical thinking in solving problems. Nowadays, a curriculum that adapts to the needs of the time certainly helps students maximize their learning experience. The current curriculum is the Freedom to Learn curriculum, a refinement of the 2013 curriculum. The purpose of this research is to investigate the problems associated with implementing a Freedom to Learn curriculum. Descriptive analysis is used in this study. This study focuses on SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut Palangkaraya's principal and teachers. Data is gathered via observation, interviews, and surveys. According to the study's findings, the problem with implementing a Freedom to Learn curriculum is that there is still a lack of sufficient understanding of a Freedom to Learn curriculum, this can be highlighted as follows: 1 The challenge of creating instructional modules and learning objectives, 2. The inability to access the Freedom to Learn teaching platform is caused by an inactive learning account ID, 3 Inactivating learning account ID, which prevents access to the self-directed learning platform, 4. Have not completed the preliminary assessment, 5. There is still confusion among educators regarding the Pancasila Student Strengthening Project.

Keywords: learning media, digital platform, primary studies learning, literature review

INTRODUCTION

Education is a way by which students can improve their inherent skills. Furthermore, [Sujana \(2019\)](#) describes it as a continual process that leads to the development of a long-term quality built-in in national Pancasila and cultural values. The National Education System, 2003, is also discussed in Section 3, stating that "National education develops the capacity to shape a prestigious national character and society for the improvement of the nation's life." It attempts to develop each student into a reputable, trustworthy, well-being intelligent, competent, creative, autonomous, democratic, and dependable citizen ([Indonesia, 2003](#)).

Implementation is applying a well-organized plan that has been extensively developed or created. Implementation normally happens after all planning has been accomplished and has been prepared for action. Furthermore, Usaman as cited by [Inkiriwang \(2019\)](#) defines implementation as a planned mechanism of activity and action to achieve the goals.

The Indonesian dictionary defines a problem as "something that cannot be solved". A problem is an issue that comes in a specific environment ([Departemen Pendidikan Indonesia, 2008, p.1103](#)). Problems with theme-based learning can be attributed to problems that arise during method implementation.

According to [Insani \(2019\)](#), curriculum development is fundamental to education. This is because, without a curriculum, education cannot be implemented. Meanwhile, according to [Wahyuni \(2015\)](#), the

curriculum is the main objective of education implementation in Indonesia. The curriculum is not only viewed as a standard document but as an important document that improves education to achieve national education goals. This education cannot be achieved unless educators or teachers are already familiar with the current curriculum. To achieve the set educational goals, educators or teachers must fully understand the curriculum that is currently being used (Angga et al., 2021).

A Freedom to Learn curriculum includes various extracurricular activities to help students understand the concepts and strengthen their abilities. In addition, teachers have the freedom to select teaching materials that are appropriate for their student's learning needs and interests. Furthermore, a Freedom to Learn curriculum contributes to the realization of the Pancasila student image, which is shaped by themes determined by the government (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

The implementation of a Freedom to Learn curriculum is still not mandatory in all Indonesian schools. This means that implementing a Freedom to Learn curriculum remains optional, rather than mandatory. However, the government has provided an opportunity for schools interested in implementing the curriculum to learn more about it through a government-created platform. In this case, the researcher wanted to investigate the problems that arise when implementing the Freedom to Learn curriculum in a primary school that wasn't given a formal decree from the central government but chose to try to implement the Freedom to Learn curriculum independently, namely SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut in Palangkaraya City.

The learning principles of the Freedom to Learn curriculum are designed with students' development and academic performance in consideration, focusing on their needs and making the learning process more meaningful for them. Learning is designed to promote lifelong learning, rely on various student-centered learning methods, and provide skills relevant to this generation. The probable result is that students are prepared to face future challenges (Susanto, 2013).

This reminds us of the well-known motto developed by National Education Figure Ki Hajar Dewantara. The motto is Ing ngarso Sung Tulodo (Those who walk in front should guide with example), Ing Madyo Mangun Karso (Those who walk in the middle should raise spirits), and Tut Wuri Handayani (Those who walk behind should inspire). Ki Hajar Dewantara's wisdom should be used as an example for us to follow, especially in these days marked by high reactivity, or Freedom to Learn curriculum. A great teacher has advantages when dealing with students, associate teachers, educational staff, and related parties, such as students' parents and stakeholders.

However, it is undeniable that any continual activity or transformation will come with problems or issues, including the implementation of this Freedom to Learn curriculum. The existence of problems doesn't lead us to retreat, become discouraged, or, worse, blame others. On the other hand, the existence of problems will hopefully become challenges that must be addressed and solved, with solutions found to ensure that the purpose of this change continues to benefit all parties involved.

METHOD

This study used descriptive analysis, which refers to a study that aims to describe current phenomena, events, or things (Hartati, 2017; Kemp, 2018). This research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut Palangkaraya. This study's subjects were the principal and teachers at SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut Palangkaraya. In this study, the researcher actively took part in data collection as an observer, with the survey in the form of a questionnaire helping as a secondary instrument. The data were analyzed using M.B. Miles and A.M. Huberman's (1994) data analysis technique, which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

RESULTS

Based on observations and surveys conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut, some findings have been revealed related to the implementation of the 2022 Freedom to Learn curriculum. Based on the findings of the interview with Sandra Aryani K, S.Pd, the principal of SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Implementation Strategy

A school law hasn't facilitated SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut to implement the Freedom to Learn curriculum. The principal, Sandra Aryani, has already begun to implement the Freedom to Learn curriculum in the lower and upper grades. This is an attempt to reestablish the learning process, as the Freedom to Learn curriculum is currently being implemented at all educational levels. Thus, it is possible to estimate any implementation gaps or challenges. As a result, an effort is made to research the Freedom to Learn curriculum while also implementing it in a stage-appropriate approach in the classroom.

However, the learning process pattern needs to be modified because there isn't much instruction provided and the educational institution hasn't decided on a format for assessment and evaluation reports so far. Educators have worries about developing lesson plans that support learning objectives and administering assessments. Especially, the results of students' competency which must be reported to parents.

2. Training

Since the Freedom to Learn curriculum is still in its initial stages of development, the Freedom to Learn curriculum counselor offers the training. SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut registered a three-day in-house training on the Freedom to Learn curriculum. The training implementation included new paradigm learning, learning outcomes discussion, analysis of learning outcomes into learning goals and learning objectives process, differentiated teaching modules, diagnostic assessments, and Pancasila student profile strengthening projects.

However, the challenge is that teachers still do not fully understand how to use the Freedom to Learn curriculum platform. The learning account is still not accessible, so creating the expected teaching modules remains difficult.

3. Evaluation

Preparing the teaching and project modules in stages takes one day per week. Apart from time constraints, SD Muhammadiyah Pahandut follows a full-day schedule from Monday to Friday. Due to time constraints, the teaching modules used remain centered only on the center's teaching modules; however, teachers are free to create their own customizable teaching modules and assessment techniques. According to the survey results of teachers who adopted the Freedom to Learn curriculum teaching using a Likert scale questionnaire, the results with the largest percentage of the learning process are shown in Table 1.

Indicator	Criteria			
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %
Understanding of the Freedom to Learn Curriculum	6 (5,5%)	10 (18,5%)	20 (37,03%)	18 (33,3%)
Implementation of Learning	2 (2,5%)	10 (12,8%)	37 (47,4%)	29 (37,1%)
Implementation of Assessment	0	6 (16,6%)	7 (19,4%)	23 (63,8%)
Understanding of the Pancasila Student Strengthening Project	4 (8,3%)	6 (12,5%)	13 (15,4%)	25 (52,08%)

In line with the survey results above, first and fourth-grade teachers face some challenges in implementing autonomous curriculum learning. Each indicator shows the problems listed below:

Understanding the Freedom to Learn Curriculum. According to the survey results, 33.3% of educators believe they understand the Freedom to Learn curriculum. Meanwhile, 5.5% of teachers said they had difficulty understanding many of the issues related to a Freedom to Learn curriculum.

Implementation of Learning. 37% of teachers believe they have fully planned and implemented the Freedom to Learn curriculum's learning principles, while 2.5% have hardly done so.

Implementation of Assessment. 63% of teachers have effectively used authentic assessment in the learning process, while 16.6% remain in the process of doing so.

Understanding of the Pancasila Student Strengthening Project. 52.08% of teachers understand the Pancasila Student Strengthening Project, while 8.3% do not. considering that the Pancasila Student Enrichment Programme is a component of the subject, the goal is learning outcomes.

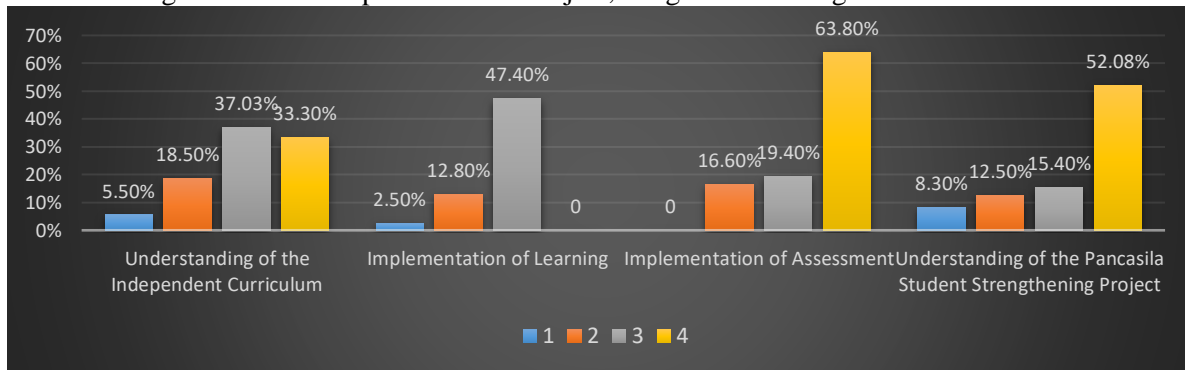


Figure 1. The participant's perspective on Freedom to Learn curriculum implementation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the study's findings, SD Muhammadiyah had no significant problems implementing Freedom to Learn programs. However, certain problems or issues were found, including:

1. *Not all teachers have access to their teaching platforms.*

The Merdeka Mengajar platform is a government-created platform that shares and provides reference materials for learning and developing the Freedom to Learn learning curriculum. Teachers can optimally use many different features. Freedom to Learn curriculum can be provided to improve the teacher's competence, and self-development can take the form of uploading best practices or works. Teachers can see and share the experiences of other teachers, providing them with references when managing classrooms.

2. *Some teachers still have difficulty to formulate learning objectives.*

According to Susanto (2013, p.101), learning for students is a process of interaction between students' various potentials (physical, non-physical, emotional, and intellectual), students and teachers, students and other students, environment, and concepts and facts, along with a process of changes caused by the interaction of different stimuli and directed responses.

There are objectives to achieve during the learning process. Learning objectives in the previous curriculum, specifically the 2013 curriculum, referred to core competencies and basic competencies, whereas learning outcomes in the Freedom to Learn Curriculum

The government defines learning outcomes as the final competencies that students must achieve at the end of each stage, rather than the core and fundamental competencies that must be completed at each grade level. The government's learning outcomes continue to be written in paragraph format, combining knowledge, skills, and behaviors.

As a result, when determining learning objectives, there should be two major components: competencies (skills to be demonstrated/achieved) and material scope (content and concepts). In conclusion, cross-class discussions are expected to make it easier to identify learning objectives.

3. Some teachers currently skipped over preliminary assessments.

Preliminary assessments are important in understanding the student's readiness for the learning process, as well as the student's preliminary ability to the learning material or concept that will be conveyed. This is also an attempt to ensure that the instruction we provide meets the students' needs.

4. There are still teachers who do not use various types of assessment and instead focus on a single form of assessment.

5. Teachers are still confused about the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project.

Teachers assume that the Pancasila profile strengthening project is part of an attempt to meet one of the Learning Outcomes. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project aims to provide knowledge or skills while also promoting the Pancasila Profile's character. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project aims to meet the competency standards of graduates.

In conclusion, based on the research conducted, there are problems with implementing the Freedom to Learn curriculum. Teachers were found to have a limited understanding of the Freedom to Learn curriculum, as well as the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile.

The problems are: 1. Formulating learning objectives, 2. Difficulties in compiling teaching modules based on learning objectives. 3. The belajar.id (learning.id) accounts have not yet been activated; 4. Initial assessments have not yet been conducted. 5. There is still confusion among teachers about the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project.

Thus, to raise the process of improving each student's quality level, the education unit can provide the best service possible through qualified educators.

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